

HARLEY RACE: THE LONG ROAD BACK

VICTORY
SPORTS
SERIES

December 1981
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THE **Wrestler**

Backlund vs. Steele:
**THE NIGHT THE
ANIMAL
RAN WILD**



Igor-Hogan Clash:
A BATTLE OF STRENGTH,
A BATTLE OF WILL

**TED DiBIASE'S ONE
GEORGIA MATCH
TOO MANY**

**The American Dream's
Recurring Nightmare:**
**"THE FUNKS WON'T
REST UNTIL THEY
BURY ME!"**



OFFICIAL WRESTLING RATINGS

WORLD WRESTLING FEDERATION

- Champion: BOB BACKLUND
 1—MAGNIFICENT MURACO
 2—GREG VALENTINE
 3—KING KONG MOSCA
 4—SGT. SLAUGHTER
 5—PEDRO MORALES
 6—KILLER KHAN
 7—PAT PATTERSON
 8—RICK MARTEL
 9—ROBERTO SOTO
 10—EL CANEK

AMERICAN WRESTLING ASSOCIATION

- Champion: NICK BOCKWINKEL
 1—CRUSHER
 2—TITO SANTANA
 3—CRUSHER BLACKWELL
 4—HULK HOGAN
 5—SHEIK ADNAN AL-KAISSIE
 6—BARON VON RASCHKE
 7—JERRY LAWLER
 8—GINO HERNANDEZ
 9—GREG GAGNE
 10—JIM BRUNZELL

MOST POPULAR

- 1—ANDRE THE GIANT
 2—DUSTY RHODES
 3—BRUNO SAMMARTINO
 4—BOB BACKLUND
 5—TOMMY RICH
 6—MIL MASCARAS
 7—RIC FLAIR
 8—MR. WRESTLING II
 9—RICK STEAMBOAT
 10—TITO SANTANA



KING KONG MOSCA



WAHOO McDANIEL



HULK HOGAN



MIL MASCARAS

NATIONAL WRESTLING ALLIANCE

- Champion: DUSTY RHODES
 1—WAHOO McDANIEL
 2—TOMMY RICH
 3—IVAN KOLOFF
 4—CHARLIE COOK
 5—RIC FLAIR
 6—HARLEY RACE
 7—PETER MAIVIA
 8—JOHN STUDD
 9—DORY FUNK JR.
 10—LES THORNTON

TAG TEAMS

- 1—THE ANDERSON BROTHERS
 2—TONY GAREA & RICK MARTEL
 3—GREG GAGNE & JIM BRUNZELL
 4—THE ASSASSINS
 5—JIMMY SNUKA & TERRY GORDY
 6—IVAN KOLOFF & CHRIS MARKOFF
 7—MR. FUJI & MR. SAITO
 8—THE SAMOANS
 9—TULLY BLANCHARD & GINO HERNANDEZ
 10—MASSA FUCHI & MR. ONEIDA

MOST HATED

- 1—MAGNIFICENT MURACO
 2—RODDY PIPER
 3—JIMMY SNUKA
 4—HARLEY RACE
 5—GREG VALENTINE
 6—KEN PATERA
 7—KILLER KHAN
 8—ASSASSIN #1
 9—TERRY GORDY
 10—KING KONG MOSCA

WHAT'S HAPPENING!

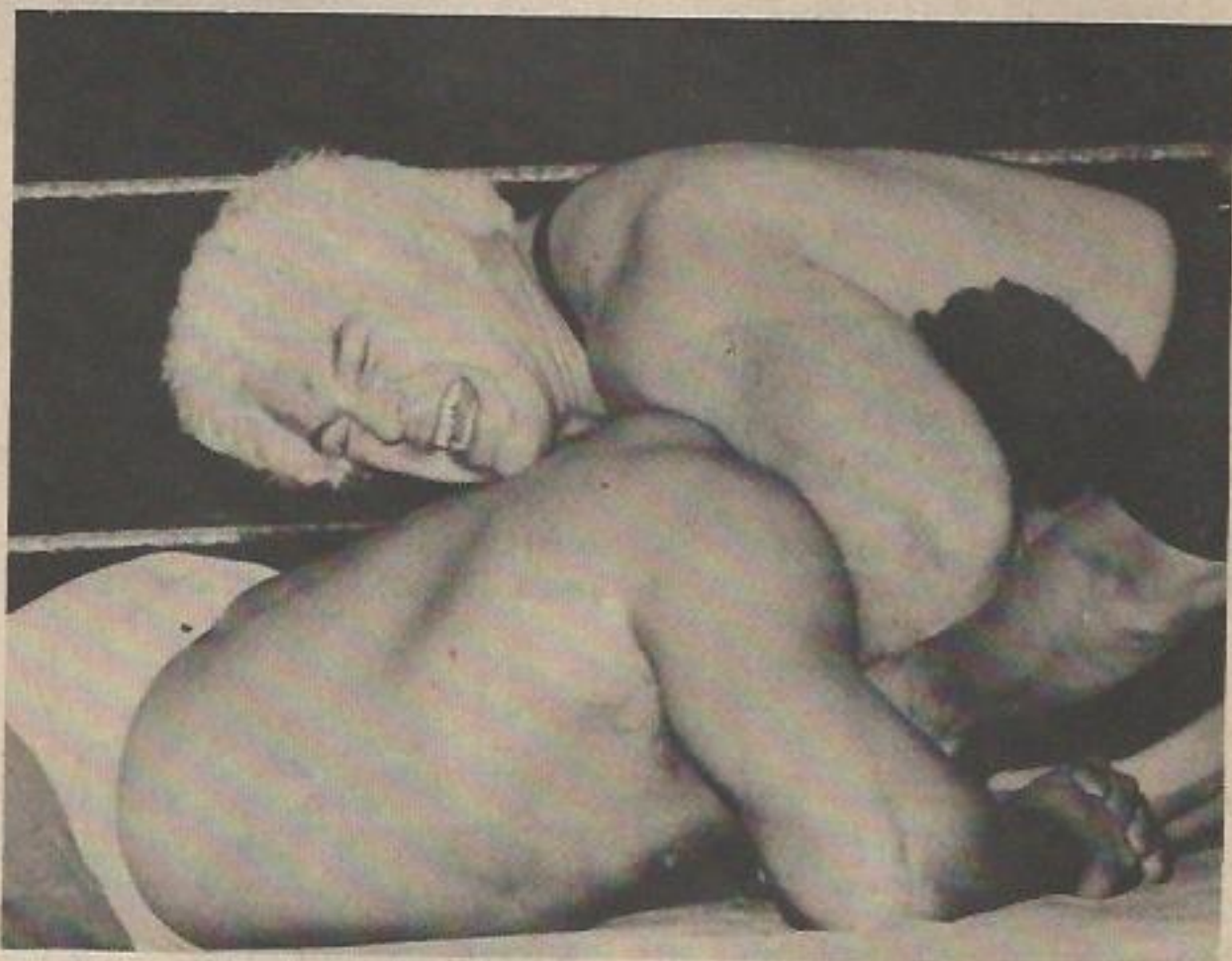
By BILL APTER

KEN PATERA HAS retired the Georgia title! According to Patera, he got sick of the lack of competition and has left Georgia forever! We're told by very reliable sources, however, that Patera became extremely nervous just minutes before his scheduled Omni Auditorium defense against former champion Tommy Rich. "He just handed the officials his belt, said he did not want to wrestle Rich, and left Georgia," an official of the Georgia wrestling commission told us in an exclusive interview.

Promoters put the vacant belt up for grabs in a bout between Tommy Rich and Masked Superstar and Rich was victorious.

Patera refused to discuss the matter when we contacted him. Why he really walked away from his championship is still to be determined.

Wahoo McDaniel is the New United States champion, emerging victorious after a brutal battle with Roddy Piper. "It took almost 15 tomahawk chops to wear that guy down," said Wahoo shortly after the match. "I don't like that Piper's tactics, but damn, he is one of the toughest individuals I have ever faced!"



Above: Ken Patera strangles his opponent. Patera has given up the Georgia title. Left: Wahoo McDaniel is the new United States champion.

Professor Toru Tanaka has a feature role in the martial arts movie "An Eye for an Eye." . . . Adrian Adonis is headed to the WWF . . . Sitting in the audience at the last Madison Square Garden show was none other than "The Calypso Kid," Dory Dixon. Dory made a name for himself in the '60s

(Continued on page 52)

CORRESPONDENTS Reports

SHREVEPORT, LA—Correspondent: Clay Waxham—The main event at the Auditorium featured Junkyard Dog and Bill Watts against The Samoans, Afa and Sika, managed by Ernie Ladd. Ladd took off his shoe and interfered in the match when things looked bad for The Samoans. Watts grabbed the shoe away and used it on Ladd and Samoan Sika as Junkyard Dog took care of Afa.



The Samoans suffered a humiliating defeat at the hands of Junkyard Dog and Bill Watts.

The Samoans suffered a humiliating defeat.

In other bouts, Bob Roop successfully defended his Louisiana heavyweight title against Super Destroyer . . . Kabuki defeated Dick Murdoch with the help of manager Gary Hart . . . Kerry Von Erich was disqualified for throwing Paul Orndorff over the top rope.

If you would like your area of the country represented in these reports, while also being officially credited with your own by-line, send us reports of the matches you attend. You will have the thrill of seeing your name in an internationally known magazine while at the same time helping to improve the quality of wrestling in your area. So why not give it a try? You will be glad you did!

Send your reports to: Correspondent Editor, Box 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571.

ST. LOUIS, MO—Correspondent: Dave McCluskey—NWA champion Dusty Rhodes put his title on the line against "Nature

Boy" Ric Flair. Rhodes took the first fall and Flair took the second. In the third and deciding fall, each man started to punch each other all around the ring. Flair then trapped Rhodes in the figure-four leglock. Rhodes got to the ropes then bodyslammed Flair and hit him with the bionic elbowdrop to finish off Flair for the win.

In other bouts, Ken Patera and Jack Brisco were both disqualified in their wild match . . . Pat O'Connor whipped Bobby Jagers.

BALTIMORE, MD—Correspondent: Francis Whelan—The main event at the Baltimore Civic Center pitted wrestling's "living legend" Bruno Sammartino against muscular King Kong Mosca. In the early going, the match was about even as both men released maneuver after maneuver. Near the end, Bruno had a slight advantage. Then a mid-ring collision caused Bruno to fall down on the canvas and for Mosca to fall out of the ring. Mosca was counted out of the ring and Bruno was victorious once again.

In other bouts, Rick Martel and
(Continued on page 57)



Dusty Rhodes took two-out-of-three falls from "Nature Boy" Ric Flair to defend his NWA title in St. Louis.

YOU ASKED US

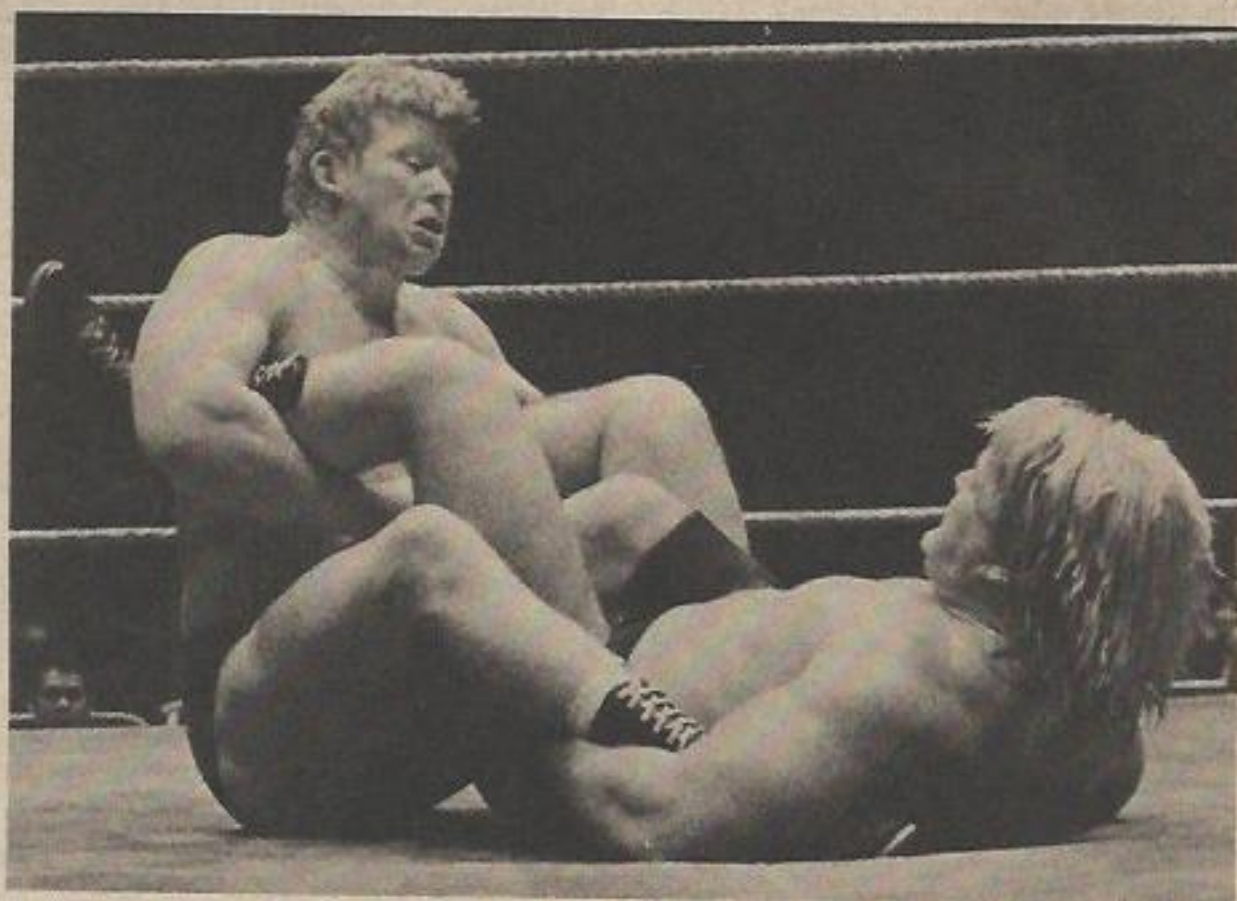
Here's the monthly feature which YOU get to write! It's your chance to have a top wrestler answer YOUR question! Only the best questions will be answered—so put on your thinking caps and come up with some good ones! Address your questions—and who you would like to have answer them—to: YOU ASKED US, c/o THE WRESTLER, PO BOX 48, Rockville Centre, N.Y. 11571. Questions will be answered only in this column and at our discretion!

Q: "I would like to know how Bob Backlund feels about everyone complaining that all he does is fight rulebreakers."—Bonnie Chadwick, Lebanon, PA

A: "It's true that most of my matches have been against rulebreakers," replied Backlund, "but when you're the champ, it seems that the only people who want to try and take your belt are the rulebreakers. I try and lead by example, and it doesn't really matter to me whether a man is a rulebreaker or a purely scientific wrestler. As champion, I'll defend my title against any and all challengers."

Q: "I would like to know where Larry Zbyszko is now and does he plan to come back to his loyal fans in the WWF in the foreseeable future?"—Judi Lyman, Holyoke, MA

A: A spokesman for Zbyszko says that Larry has recently been toying with show business, to the point of



Bob Backlund narrowly avoids being maneuvered into a figure-four leglock during one of his early WWF title defenses against Greg Valentine. Backlund claims he is willing to defend his belt against any challenger.

becoming a semi-regular guest on the *Uncle Floyd Show*. There are also plans for Larry to cut a record, though nothing definite has been decided as of yet. Regarding wrestling, the anonymous spokesman said, "Larry has been stepping up his physical maintenance

program recently, and has been studying current films of the matches of Sammartino. You figure the rest."

Q: "A question for Jerry Lawler: Will the feud between you and Terry Funk ever end?"—Li-ad Zadok, Miami, FL

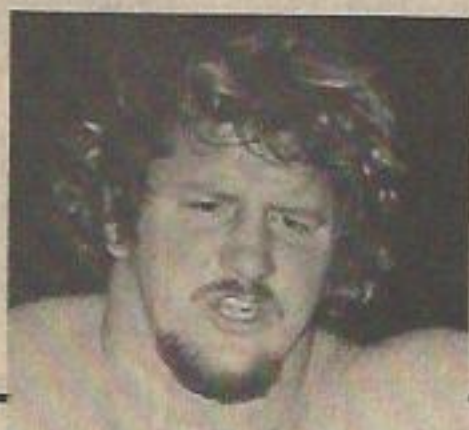
A: "I'll tell you, Li-ad," replied Lawler, "the only way this feud is going to end is in victory. Since victory means that one man must be eliminated, you know what the outcome is going to be. I feel sorry that Terry will eventually lose this feud, but obviously that's the way it's going to be. The inferior wrestler always loses a feud, and Funk is clearly the inferior in this battle. To

answer your question, yes the feud *will* end . . . in victory for the invincible Jerry Lawler."

Q: "I want to ask Tommy Rich if he thinks he is ready to wrestle for the NWA championship again and hold the title
(Continued on page 54)

Every issue, this magazine praises the noteworthy and damns those who violate the spirit of wrestling's dignity. The praiseworthy are given a "thumbs up," the disgraceful are marked with "thumbs down." Here is this month's roll of honor and shame

Thumbs Up



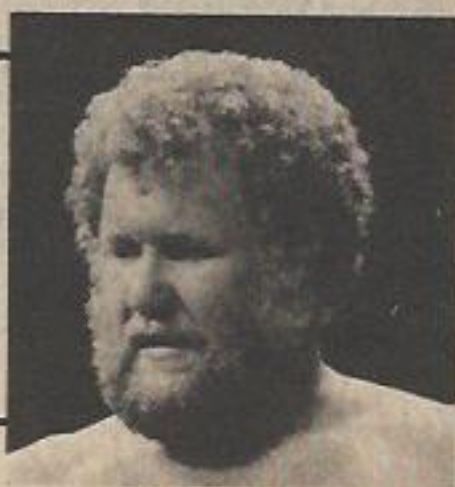
THUMBS DOWN to Terry Funk: The unprincipled Funk has accepted a bounty hunting assignment from Jim Kent. Reportedly, Kent will pay big money to the man who manages to not only defeat Tommy Gilbert, but to break one of his bones as well. Kent is bad enough for making the offer, but Funk is worse for accepting it. As long as we're at it, though, thumbs down to Kent, too.

THUMBS UP to Andre the Giant: For his persistence in attempting to eradicate Killer Khan from the face of the earth, he should be applauded. This crazed Mongolian not only dishonors his kung fu training but uses that training to maim and cripple. One of the great wrestlers of all time, we support Andre in his campaign against Khan.



THUMBS DOWN to Johnny Valiant: He has brought Hulk Hogan into the AWA. Hogan, of late, has been the spearhead of a reign of terror which threatens to cripple the current structure of AWA wrestling. Valiant was thoroughly irresponsible and thoughtless when he made this move and deserves to pay for it.

THUMBS UP to Harley Race: For not taking his defeat at the hands of Dusty Rhodes too bitterly, Race deserves respect. On the contrary, Race has decided not to sit around like a washed-up ex-champion and has begun training for another title shot and an unprecedented seventh NWA heavyweight championship. Should he succeed, Harley Race will stand alone in the record books.



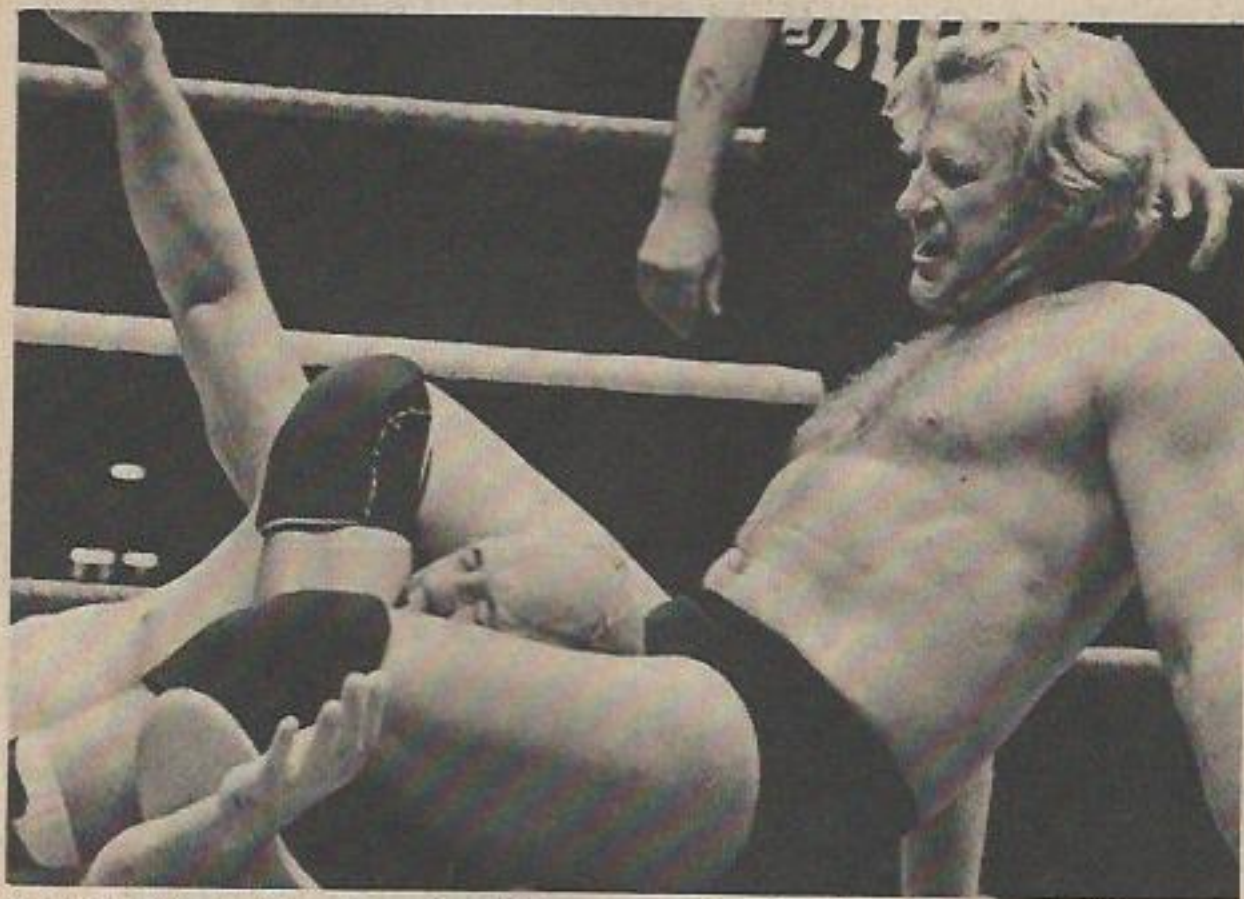
THUMBS DOWN to Larry Zbyszko: Claiming that he has put an end once and for all to Bruno Sammartino is an outright lie. Zbyszko is also in secret training preparing for an imminent invasion of the WWF, according to anonymous sources close to Zbyszko. For discrediting a legend like Sammartino and plotting such destruction, he has earned our disrespect.

(Continued on page 64)

Thumbs Down

Q&A

Each month, **THE WRESTLER** will present a "Question and Answer" forum with an important figure in the wrestling world. It is your chance to meet wrestling's biggest stars as they answer the questions uppermost on the fans' minds



Though their battles throughout the years were classic, Nick Bockwinkel did not actually defeat Verne Gagne to achieve his present championship. The vacated AWA title was awarded to him because he was the number-one contender.

Q: Nick, I realize it's old news, but I want to ask you anyway about the Blackburn decision.

A: I'm glad you brought that up. It's been months since that decision was handed down, and I'm still getting

mail about it. For the final time, I will explain that Stanley Blackburn is AWA president, it was his decision to award the belt to me after Verne Gagne retired, and it was a decision based on one fact

and one fact alone: I deserved it.

Q: What about the argument that you should have worked your way through a series of elimination matches?

A: And have the AWA go without a champion and without direction for all that time? It would be complete chaos. By the time the matches could be set up, locations determined, the proper schedule of opponents worked out, it could take upwards of a year or more! Blackburn realized this, and he made the only rational decision he could.

Q: How does your manager Bobby Heenan feel about all this?

A: Well, Bobby, of course, agrees with the Blackburn decision. He brought up a good point the other day: it seems that all the mail we've been getting is not anti-Bockwinkel, but it's anti-Blackburn. The fans really aren't against me so much as they are against the decision that Blackburn made. If they could only realize that it was the only decision he COULD make, I think a lot of the



NICK BOCKWINKEL

NICK BOCKWINKEL'S REPUTATION as a champion continues to grow. As bearer of the AWA title belt, Bockwinkel has had to defend his championship against a sinister battery of painstakingly brutal opposition. His rise to the AWA throne is clouded by the controversy surrounding AWA president Stanley Blackburn's decision to award the belt to Bockwinkel upon the retirement of Verne Gagne. We caught up to Bockwinkel prior to a title defense against Tito Santana recently in Omaha, Nebraska.

controversy would settle down.

Q: Let's switch to another subject for a minute. Rumors are circulating that a match is in the making between yourself and Hulk Hogan. Now we talked to Hogan, and he said it was none of our business. Would you care to comment?

A: Well, it's no wonder that Hogan doesn't want to talk about wrestling, what with his trip to Hollywood and making a movie and everything. I'll tell you one thing for sure, when "Rocky III" does come out, I won't go to see it.

Q: Right. But a match between you and Hogan would be...

A: Listen, twerp! I said it's gonna be a crummy movie and nobody should go see it! That's it! That's all I'm gonna say about it! Case closed!

Q: All right, a change of subject again. You've spent a lot of time in the Texas area, particularly Houston. Any comments about that?

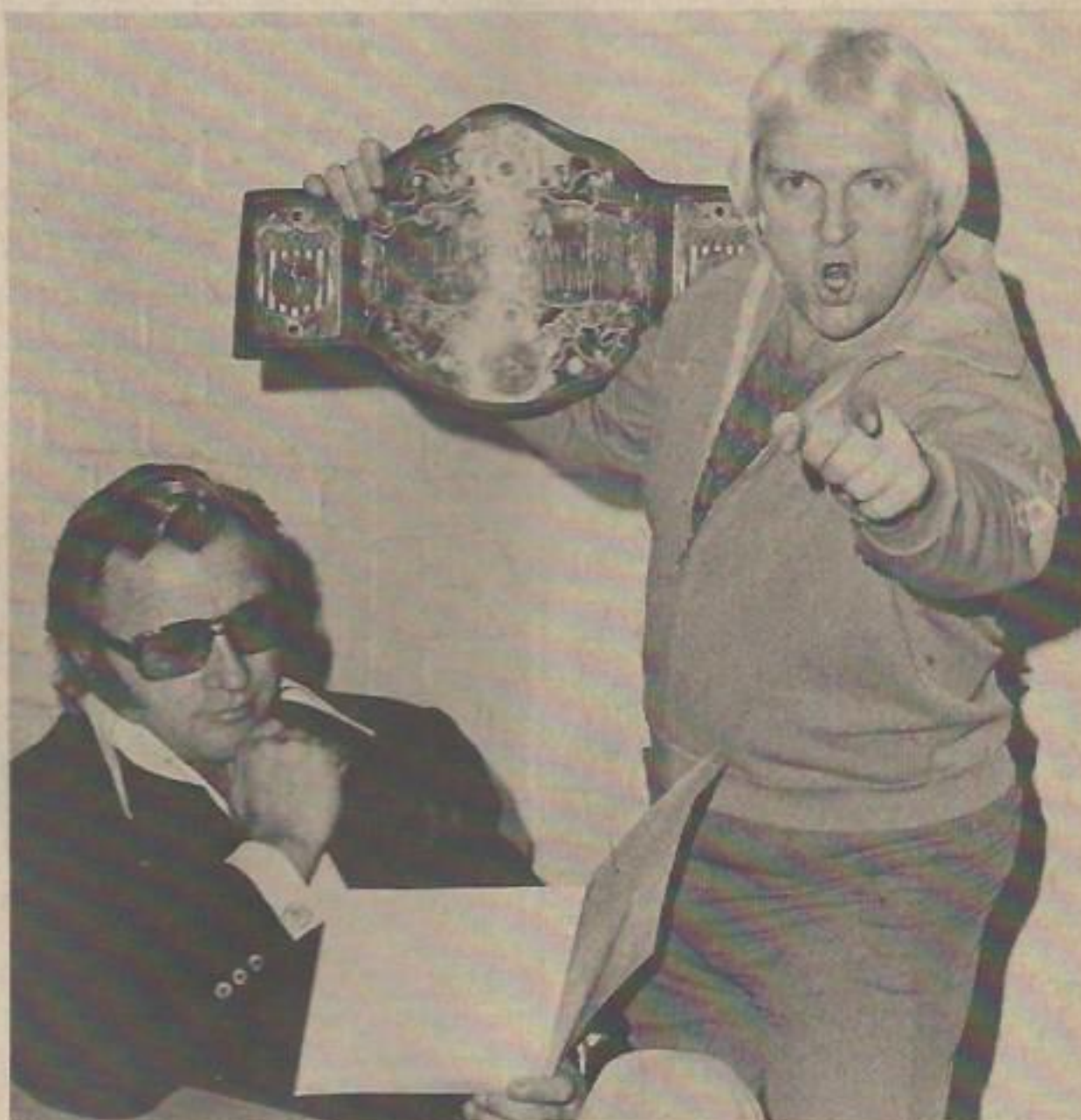
A: Well, as you know I wrestled against Tony Atlas in Houston not too long ago—that area just began taking in some AWA

matches—and as far as that is concerned, it's about time. But so far, the wrestlers I've had to go up against in Houston are all puny wimps, plain and simple.

Q: You've been in other areas, too, right?

A: Yeah, I've wrestled with that clown Jerry Lawler in Memphis. I'll tell you one thing, I think the quality of wrestler these days, at least the quality of opponent I've had to go up against, has gone down tremendously.

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A pensive Bockwinkel is not distracted by the ranting and ravings of his manager, Bobby Heenan.

INTRODUCING EL GRAN APOLLO

HIGH IN THE SKY, a bright Florida sun baked away at the state below until the temperature soared into the mid-90s. An empty soccer field boasted a lone player.

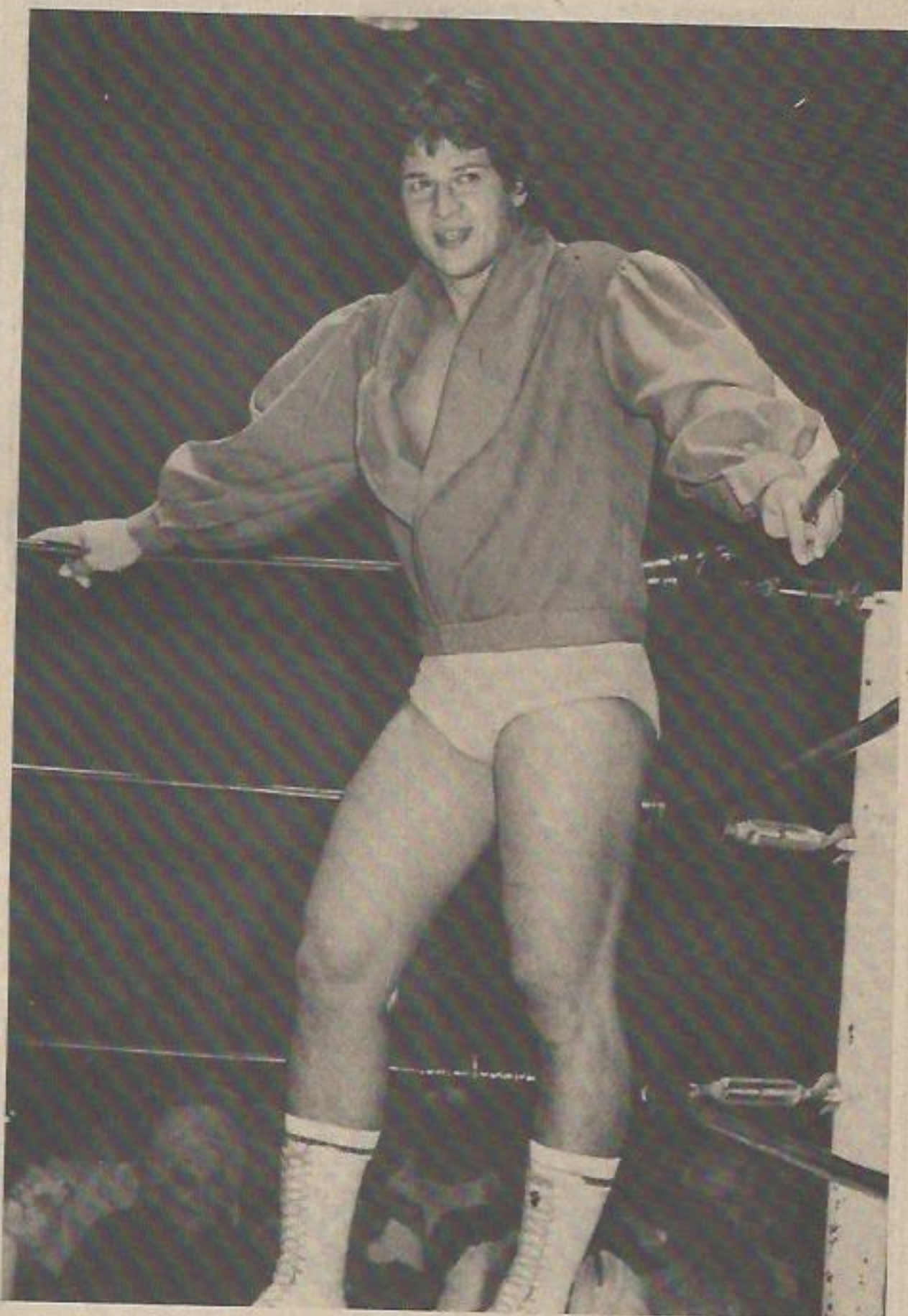
He dribbled to the goal, faked a shot, cut left, faked again, cut again, and then drilled one into the corner of the net. Retrieving the ball, he then maneuvered to the goal at the other end of the field, repeating his performance as if there were a full squad of defensemen present.

"Soccer is a great workout," says El Gran Apollo. "It builds up the legs like nothing else. Most of all, it builds stamina. That's important in wrestling."

El Gran Apollo enjoys not only soccer as a way of training for wrestling, but is very involved in bodybuilding and weightlifting as well.

"I was known as Mr. Havana," said Apollo, "and I competed in a lot of bodybuilding and weightlifting contests. For a while, it was a tossup between professional bodybuilding and wrestling. I chose wrestling because of the more direct one-on-one competition involved in the ring."

Apollo has been wrestling professionally for two years, beginning his career not in his



A young man from Cuba, first a soccer player, then a renowned weightlifter and bodybuilder. He has teamed with legendary Puerto Rican wrestler Carlos Colon and sent his own career rocketing. Meet El Gran Apollo, determined to cleanse Florida of Buzz Sawyer and other notorious enemies

native land of Cuba, but in nearby Puerto Rico.

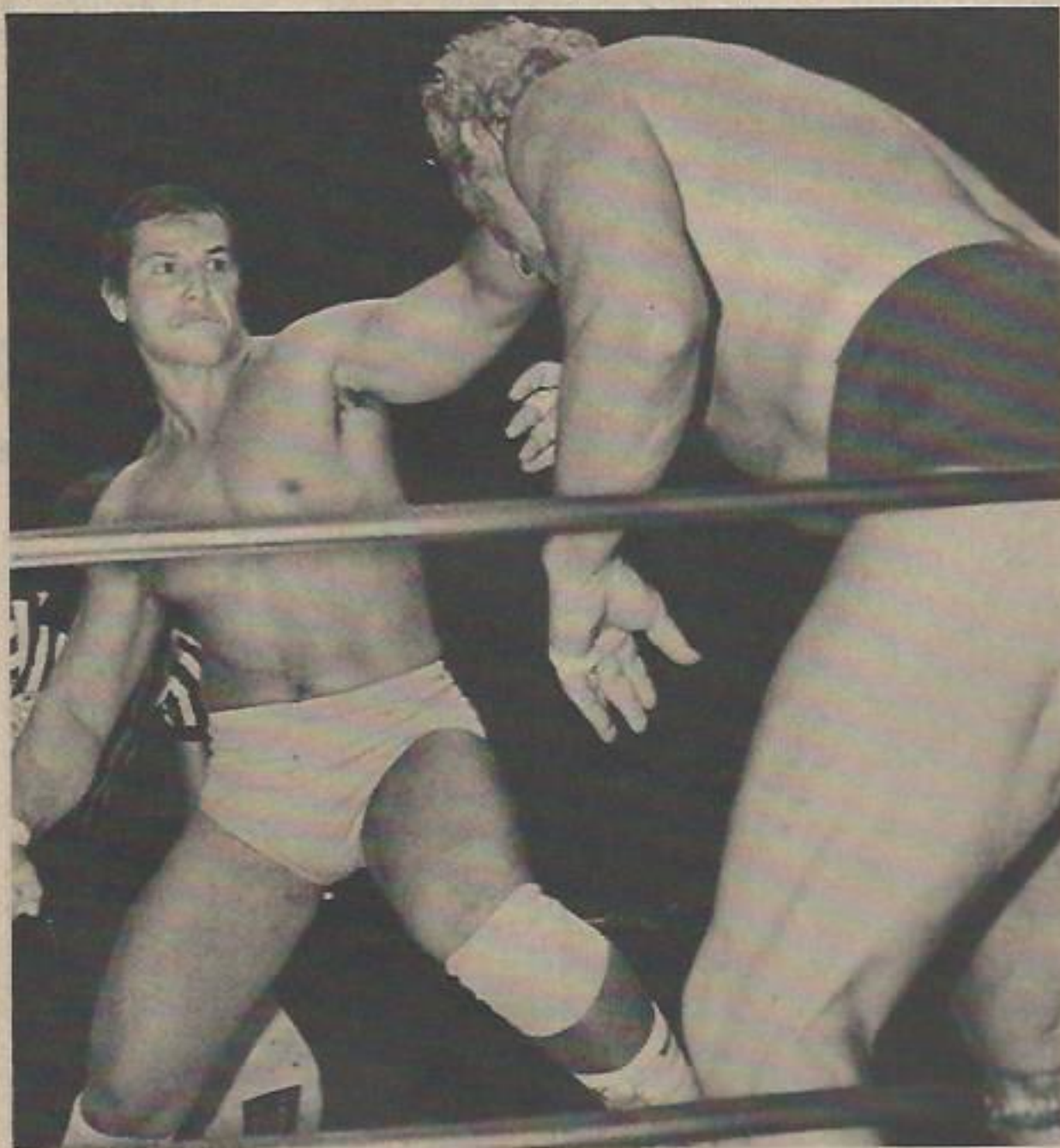
"Carlos Colon was a very well-known wrestler in Puerto Rico," explains Apollo. "I was familiar with him as a wrestler, but had never really met him until after I began wrestling in Puerto Rico.

"I was wrestling in a match," continued Apollo, "and after it was over, Carlos came up to me and introduced himself. Like I say, I knew who he was, but having never actually met him I was kind of surprised by the gesture.

"Anyway, Carlos told me how much he admired my wrestling style. Well, I don't have to tell



Nothing Buzz Sawyer can say will convince El Gran Apollo to show mercy. With one slight tug, Sawyer will be on his neck (above). Apollo aims his right hand at The Sheik's exposed head (below).



you what a compliment that was to me, especially coming from a man like Carlos. In Puerto Rico, some of your readers may not realize, Carlos Colon is as great a hero as . . . well, maybe even admired as Dusty Rhodes is here in the states.

"So Carlos spoke with me and said he had some ideas for me," recalled Apollo. "He wanted to help me some. To me, this was a tremendous honor, and of course I accepted.

"So I have worked with Carlos as my mentor for very close to

two years now. He has helped me to improve and to fine tune my style tremendously. What I really enjoy about our relationship, though, is that we occasionally get the chance to work together in Florida as a tag team combination."

No stranger to working with the great wrestlers, Apollo has also teamed up with Sweet Brown Sugar on occasion.

"I enjoy working with Sweet," El Gran told us, "he's a wrestler's wrestler, a real gentleman and a superb athlete."

While these positive aspects of wrestling add to the enjoyment of the sport for Apollo, there are also the wrestlers that Apollo finds virtually unbearable to exist with in the ring.

"Buzz Sawyer," he says angrily. "I just can't take that guy. He's so egotistical and ridiculous, and he has no right to be. He says he'll offer \$5,000 to the man who can pin his shoulders to the mat in 10 minutes or less. Well, I think I'm going to have my new car soon, because Sawyer simply isn't a good enough wrestler to endure 10 minutes without

(Continued on page 56)

PHOTOS BY DUANE LONG & PAUL BAUMAN

Backlund vs. Steele:

They told him that he should expect the unexpected, that he should be prepared for everything he could not possibly prepare for. Though it may not have shown, Bob Backlund was worried: worried about how to deal with innumerable surprises in the ring . . . worried about defending his WWF belt against a wild animal

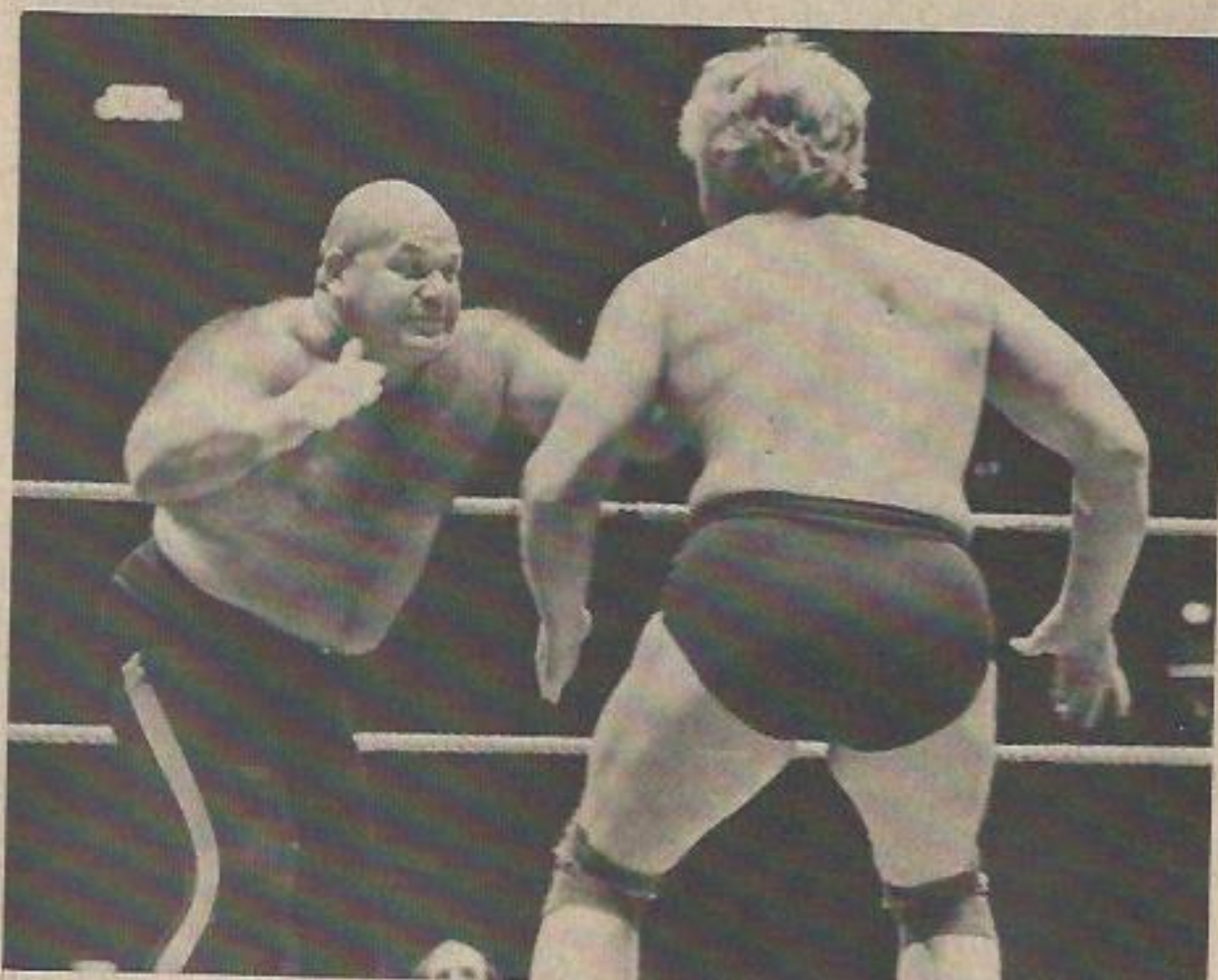
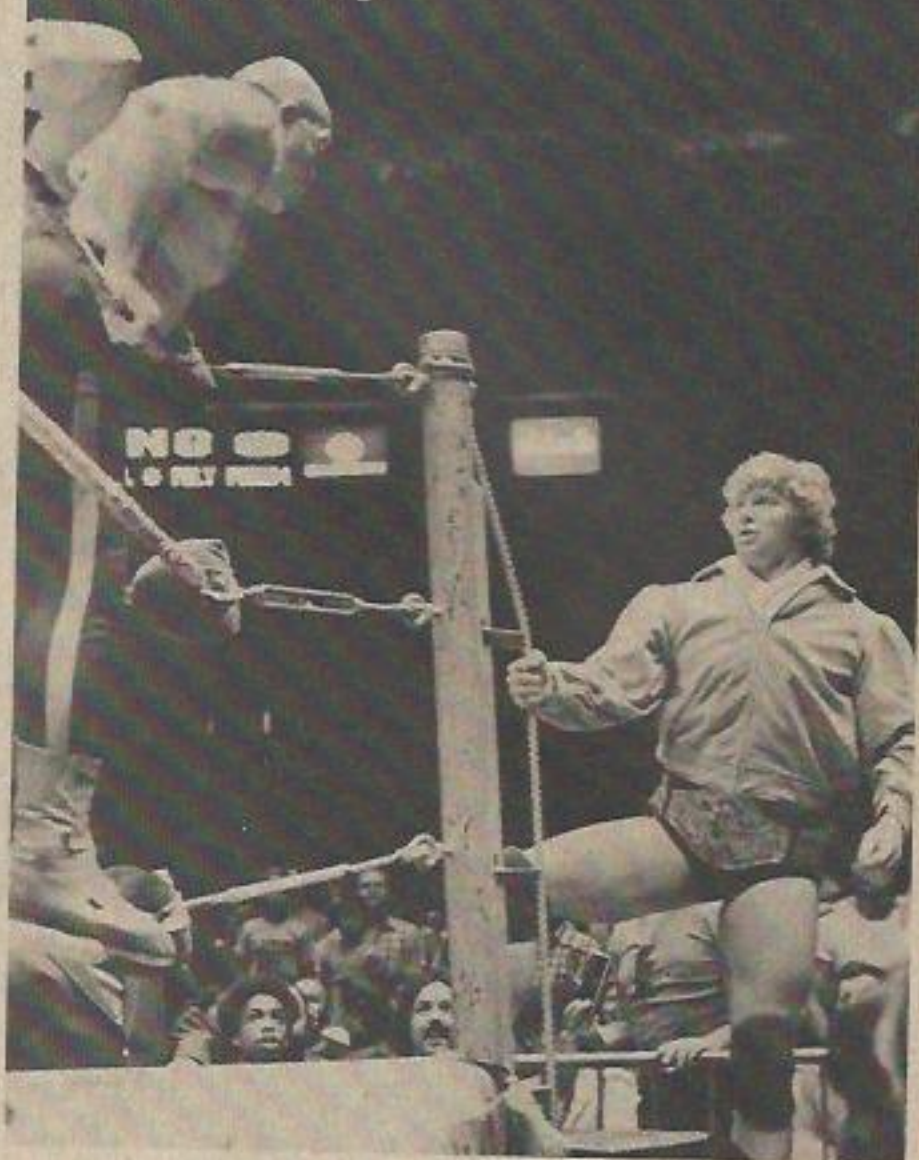
THE NIGHT THE ANIMAL RAN WILD

ONCE AGAIN IT was a sold out house at Madison Square Garden in the heart of New York City. Thousands upon thousands of the world's most vociferous wrestling fans had assembled to witness champion Bob Backlund defend his belt against the man no one feels should be allowed out of his cage: George "The Animal" Steele.

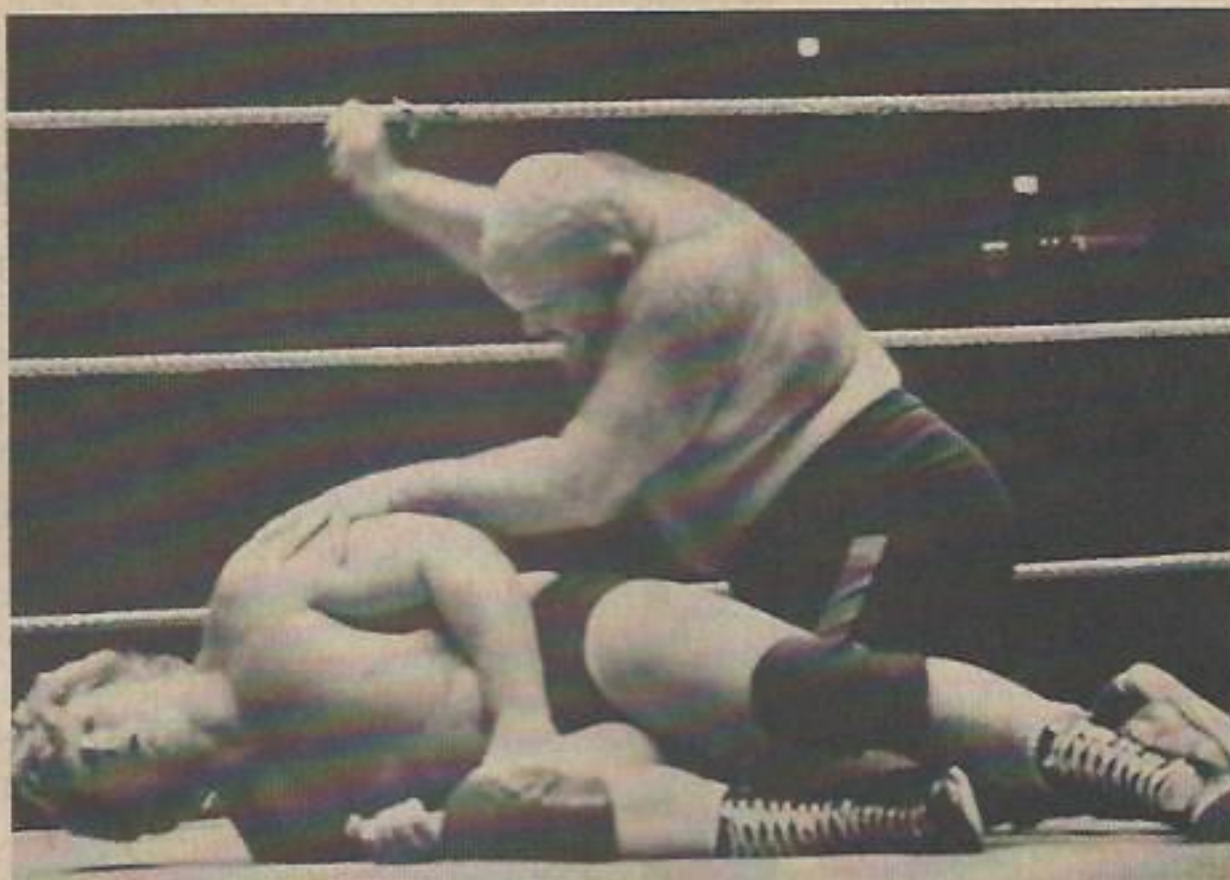
When Steele entered the ring, to the collected boos and cheers of the crowd, he began to stalk from corner to corner, glaring at the crowd and hollering at them the way that only Steele can muster.

"Backlund . . ." he boomed, as the fans screamed their reaction to the Animal's every word. "Backlund . . . gonna lose belt tonight . . . Backlund will lose

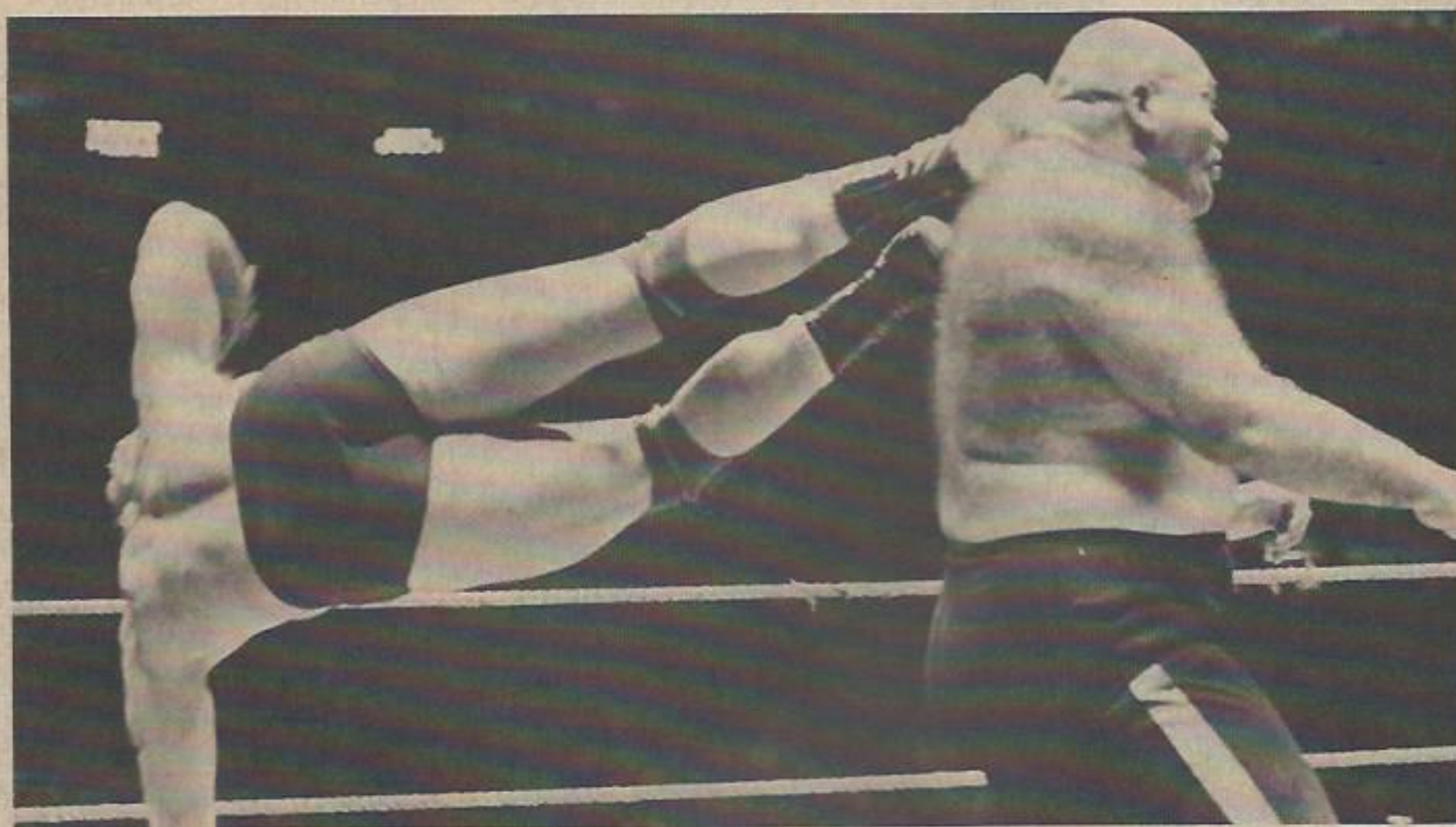
Steele blocks Backlund's entrance to the Madison Square Garden ring.



The Animal makes an awkward lunge at the champion. Backlund had a great deal of trouble adapting to Steele's style and took a great deal of punishment before figuring out a counter-attack.



The only one in the arena Steele hid his foreign object from was the referee (above left). George pounds away relentlessly at a fallen Backlund (above right). Bob connects with a dropkick from behind, leading to his victory (below).



belt . . . Bobby belt no more . . . Backlund!!!"

His cries of superiority over Backlund were met with a crowd reaction that at best could only be described as chaotic. In New York, Backlund reigns supreme, and anyone who dares to challenge the throne had better be prepared to face the consequences.

PHOTOS BY STU SAKS

As Backlund strode the pathway to the ring from his dressing room, the noise created by the combined cheers of thousands was deafening. Acknowledging the adoration of his fans, Backlund waved to the crowd and smiled a champion's smile.

As he prepared to enter the ring, George Steele lumbered

over to the corner where Backlund was and stepped up to the bottom rope. He growled at Backlund, snarling to him in the bargain: "Backlund . . . you no belt . . . gonna lose . . . Backlund!"

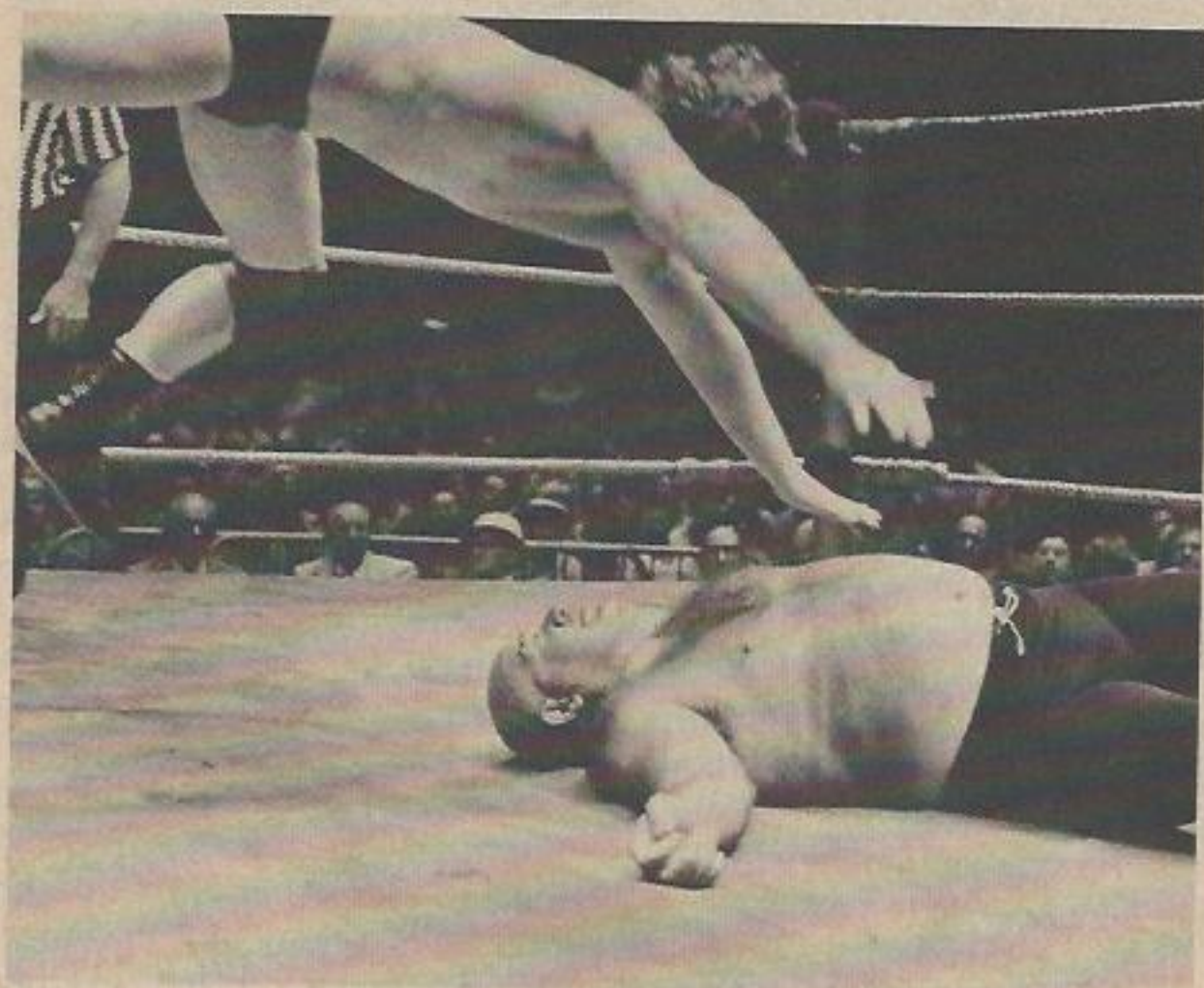
The WWF champion paid little attention to Steele, moving instead to another corner of the ring and attempted to enter. Again, Steele moved to that

corner preventing Backlund's entrance.

Finally, Arnold Skoaland had to call to the Animal, and Steele plodded over to where Backlund's manager was standing. While Skoaland held Steele's leg, Backlund was able to enter the ring.



Backlund backs Steele into a corner and unleashes a left uppercut (above). Steele is stunned in place as Backlund makes his winning dive (below).



Once the two grapplers were in the ring, and once Steele noticed that he was not alone, no time was wasted in getting down to business.

Steele came charging at Backlund like a maddened rhino, prepared to obliterate him with one smash against the mat. Backlund's reflexes were too quick for the Animal as he fell to his back and, using his legs, propelled Steele against the ropes.

The Animal was not hurt, only angered to the extreme. He came back at Backlund ready to exact revenge. Unfortunately, the champion did not see the foreign object that Steele was wielding. A quick series of shots to Backlund's back and shoulders rendered him momentarily helpless with blinding, searing agony.

To the astonishment of even his most dedicated fans, Backlund recovered with amazing speed and, while Steele was growling at the crowd, downed him with a flying dropkick to the back of the Animal's head.

"This guy is completely

fruitcake," said Backlund following his successful title defense. "Just looking at the man can tell you what a raving lunatic he is. Frankly, I'm exhausted. I don't think that this animal should ever be let out of his cage. He does everything and anything in and out of the book. He has no scruples and wouldn't even know what they were if he had any. A creature like this should not be allowed to enter into the ring against reputable wrestlers."

When asked about the rumors that he was worried about his match with Steele, Backlund was candid in his reply.

"Yes, to a certain extent, I was worried about what would happen tonight," he admitted. "I mean, like I said, he does everything and anything imaginable. There is simply no way that anyone, I don't care how good a wrestler or how much foresight you have, could prepare for every eventuality that might happen in the ring. There is just no way that you can prepare for a match against Steele and feel confident going into the ring.

"It's too chaotic," continued Backlund, "it's too unpredictable. That animal is likely to do anything at anytime. If he ever bit me, I would want to get a rabies test made... just in case."

Fortunately for his championship, Bob Backlund was able to react fast enough and strong enough to the surprises and unforeseen maneuvers that Steele threw against him.

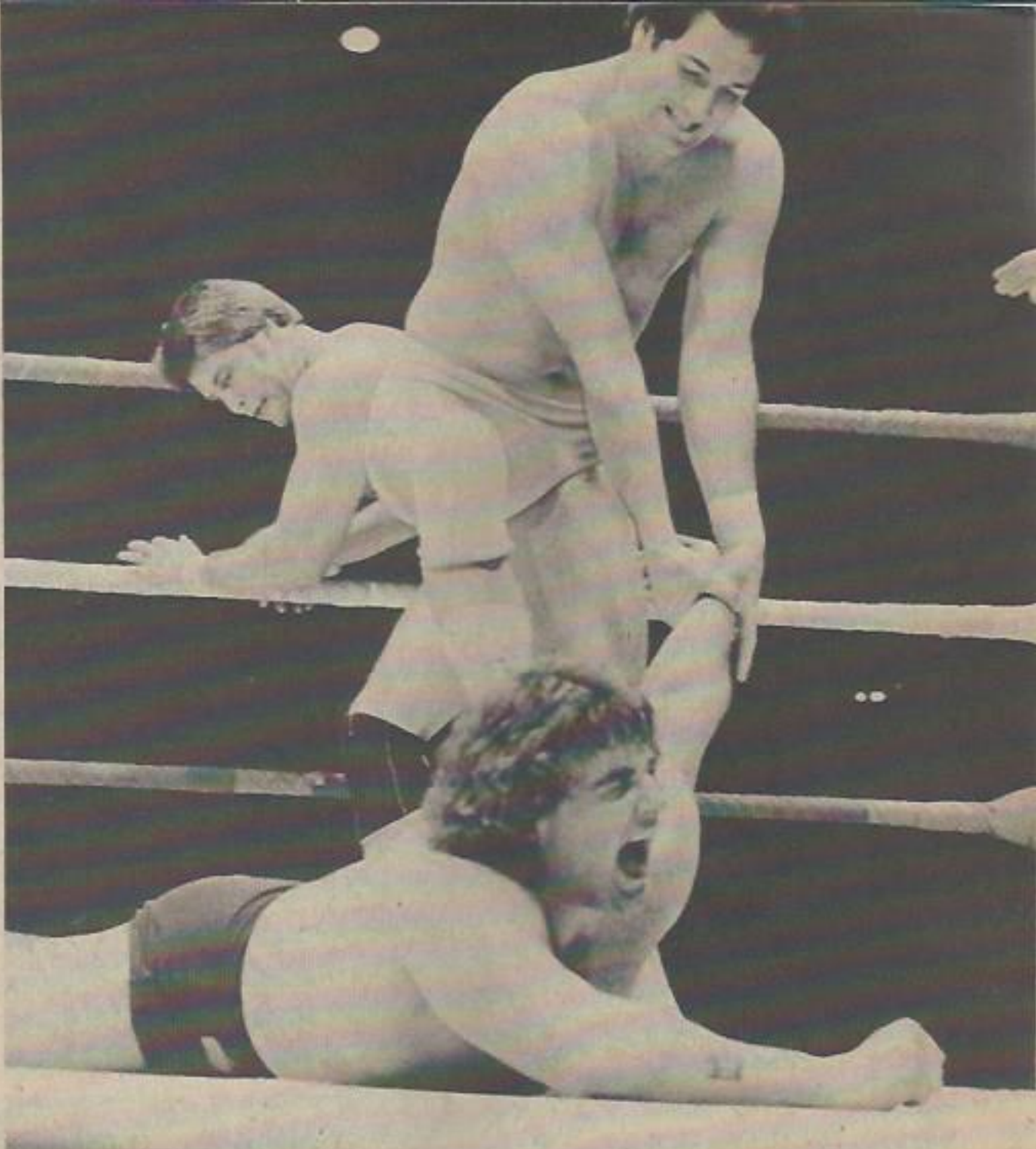
In the meantime, though, Steele runs wild, an uncaged animal waiting to vent his considerable anger against anybody who happens to be unfortunate enough to find himself in the ring with him. Whoever that unfortunate man may be, he had better expect the unexpected. □

By Captain Louis Albano

OKAY ADRIAN ADONIS and Jesse Ventura, I want you two to listen up to the old Captain here because I'm gonna lay some information on you that can take you from where you are, that can catapult you into the stratosphere, and that can make the two of you exactly what you've been struggling for all along these long months and years and that is to be the champions.

The first thing you have to do before you do anything is pay attention to the Captain, because as you know I've been the manager of 10 championship tag teams, and that number will probably rise to 11 by the time you read this as my main men Mr. Fuji and Mr. Saito continue their unbeatable victory campaign all across the face of professional wrestling.

So you pay good heed to what the Captain says when I tell you two that the first thing you have to do is to come on over to the WWF and wrestle here because I know how you two wrestle, I've seen videotapes of your matches, I know what your styles are.



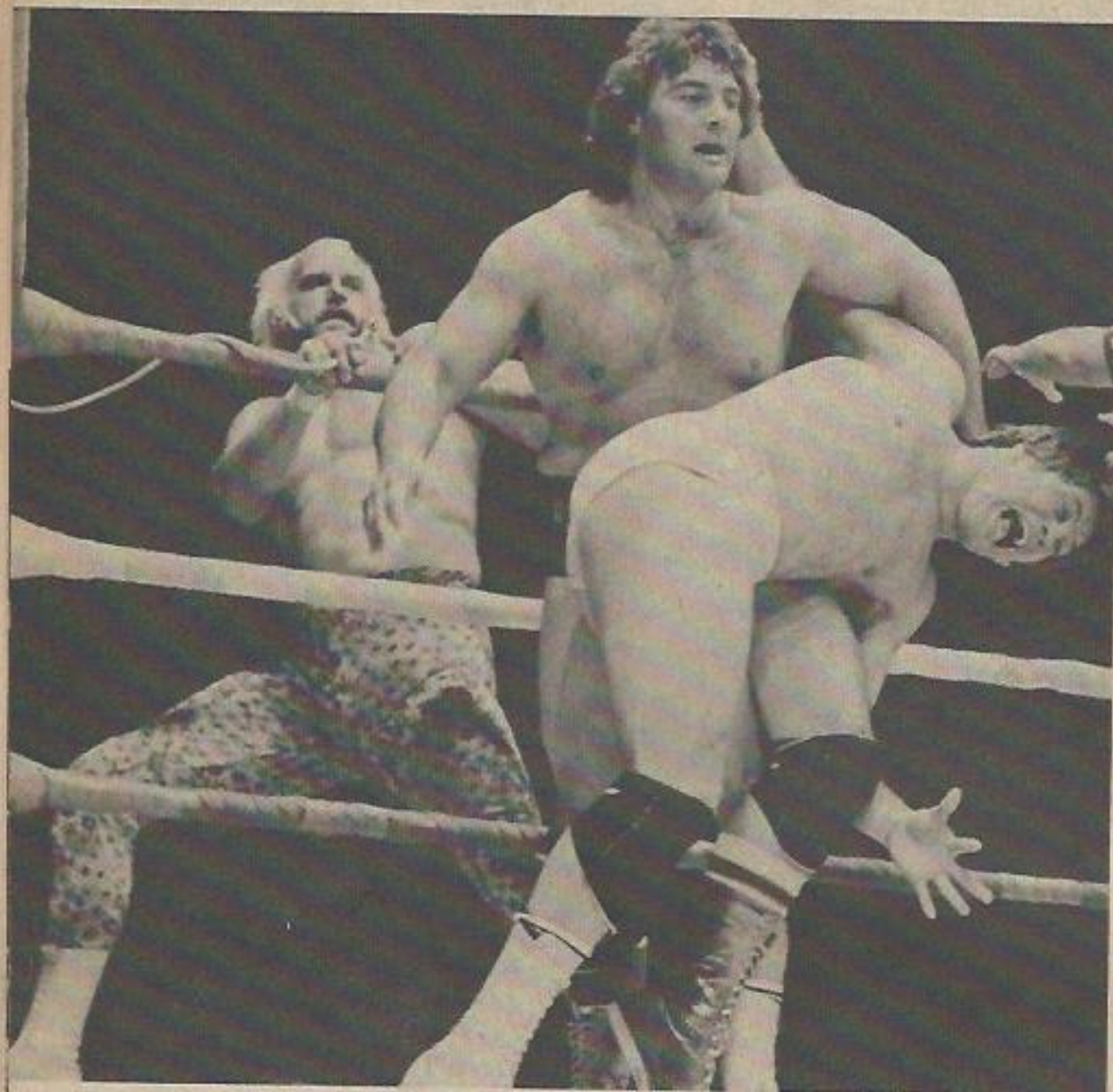
Now the Captain would not let two puny punks like Greg Gagne and Jim Brunzell get the best of a great man like Adrian Adonis. The Captain can show you the way to become universal champions like all my proteges!

An Open Letter To Adonis & Ventura:

"I'M YOUR KEY TO SUCCESS"

Manager of an unprecedented 10 championship tag team combinations, the peerless Captain Lou Albano steadfastly believes that he is the answer to the prayers of Adrian Adonis and Jesse Ventura. In this open letter, he outlines a plan of action which could lead to ultimate victory for this wrestling pair

PHOTOS BY BOB RUIZ

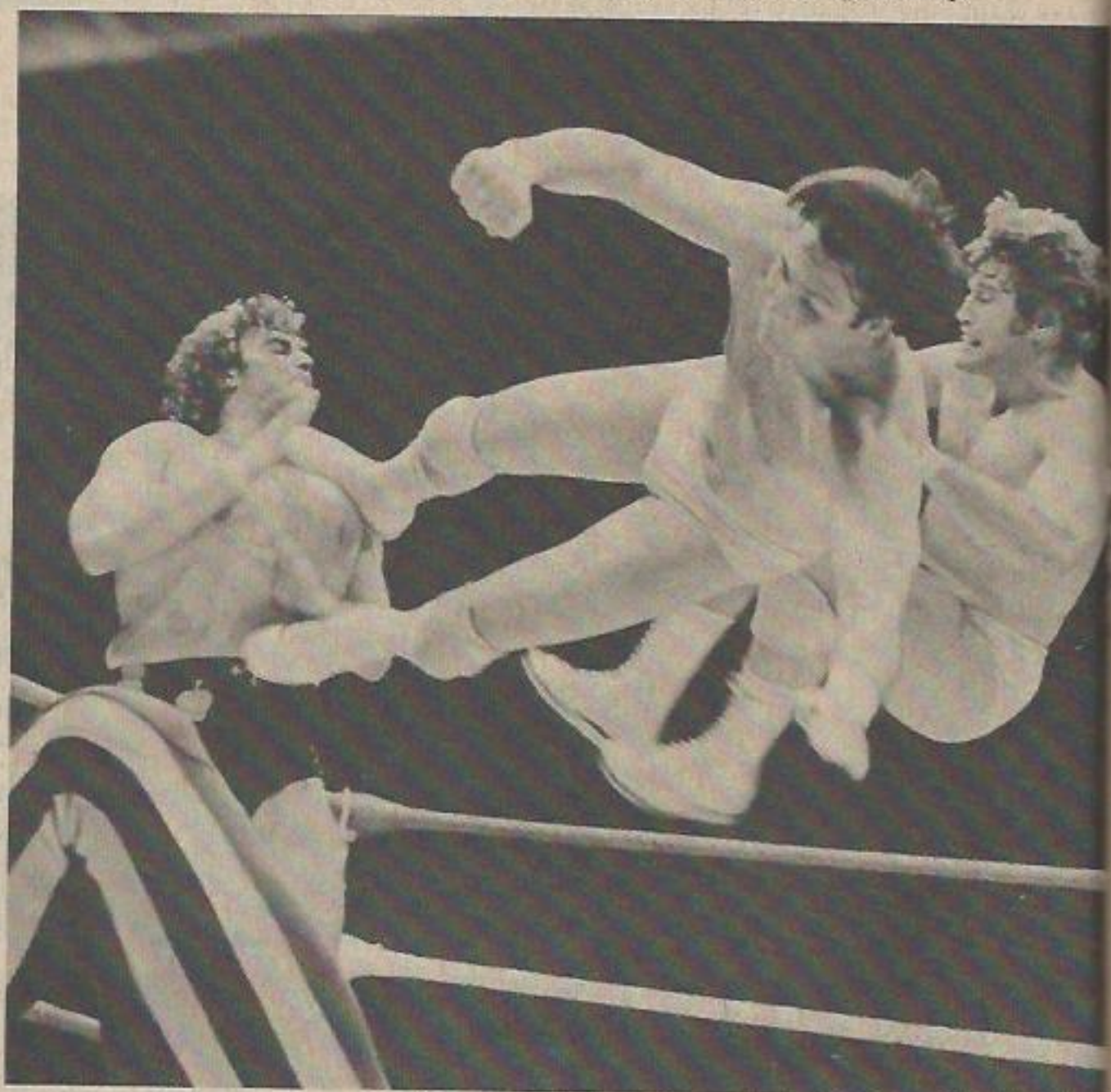


I also know that you will never dethrone Greg Gagne and Jim Brunzell because I know what sort of conniving, cheating types of people infest wrestling on all levels, and especially within the referees who are getting paid to protect the belts of Gagne and Brunzell.

So realize first of all that you are fighting what you call a losing battle over there in the AWA and that when you come to the WWF you will get a much fairer shake, particularly if you two decide to hook up with the old Captain, because I'm your key to success, your path to the championship.

Like I said, I've seen your styles on videotapes, I've had time to study them, because as you know, the Captain is a mastermind of wrestling, I spent countless hours studying the styles of all wrestlers—not only those that I manage—and that is just one of the many reasons why I am so successful in managing teams all the way to the championship.

The photo above shows you being effective, but I can show you how to cripple your opponent fast! You guys would never be a victim of a double-dropkick or a sleeper if you were with the Captain!



So when I look at you two wrestle, I see that you both have the stuff of champions, you two can win the championship belts with only a little effort and doing only a few minor things differently, things that only the Captain knows about and certainly cannot divulge in a national magazine.

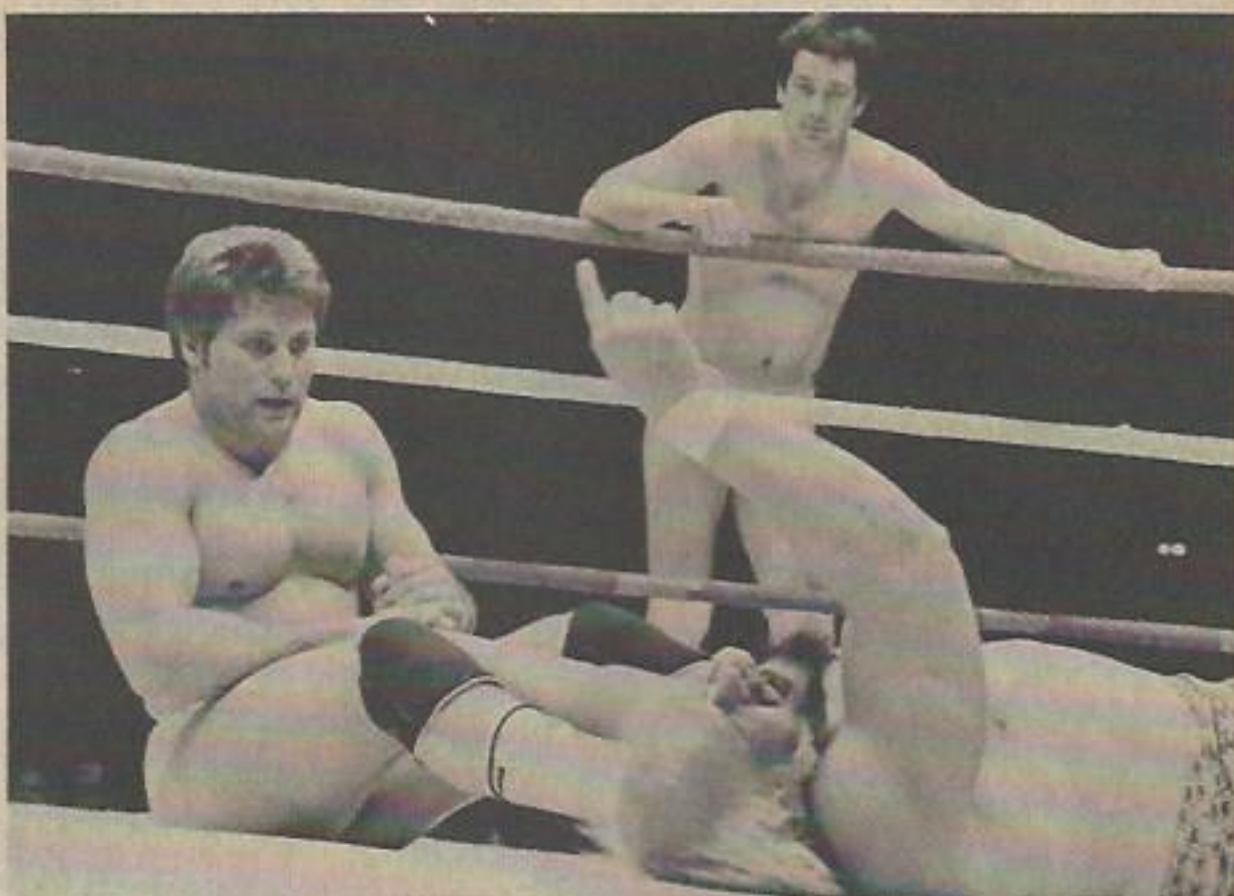
If I were your manager, I would make a few subtle changes in both your styles, nothing major, but enough to give you that additional edge in the ring against the types of opponents you would have to face here in the WWF.

I would then impart to you the Albano wisdom of the ages, the timeless techniques that only the Captain has total knowledge of and which makes champions out of every tag team combination who follows my explicitly detailed instructions to the absolute letter.

The rest of the campaign then becomes gravy, since after my teaching and training, it will become a second nature, it will become thoughtlessly natural, you'll breeze through matches against even the most brutal and senselessly arrogant opponents in all of wrestling, and the next thing you two know, you will have the championship belts around your waists.

Okay, so let's assume the unthinkable, that you might not want to hook up with the Captain, the master manager, for some reason or another, that's okay, too, because there are other good men here in the WWF that can help you two, good men like Freddie Blassie or The Grand Wizard, men who have also been successful in molding champions, but of course none so successful as the Captain.

One thing that you must always remember and never forget, my friends, is that should you make the move to the WWF, a move I heartily endorse no matter if you decide to take a manager or remain on your own as you have in the past, which I feel is one reason you



The Captain has been analyzing the situation in the pictures on these pages and I am convinced—**CONVINCED**—that with my advice, guidance, ability and computer brain, I can make you champions!



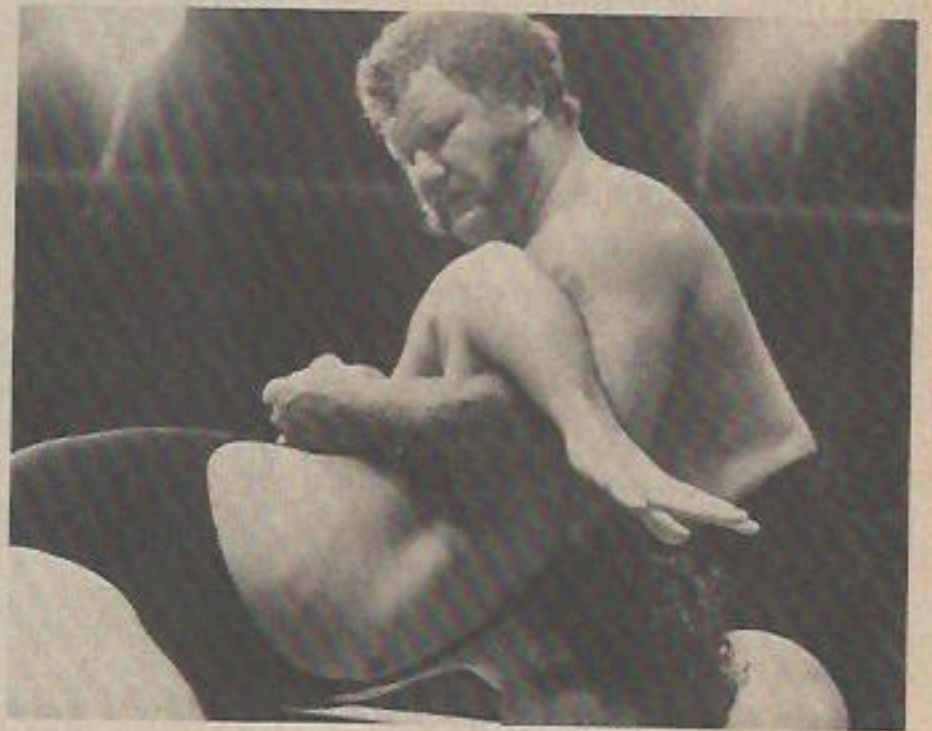
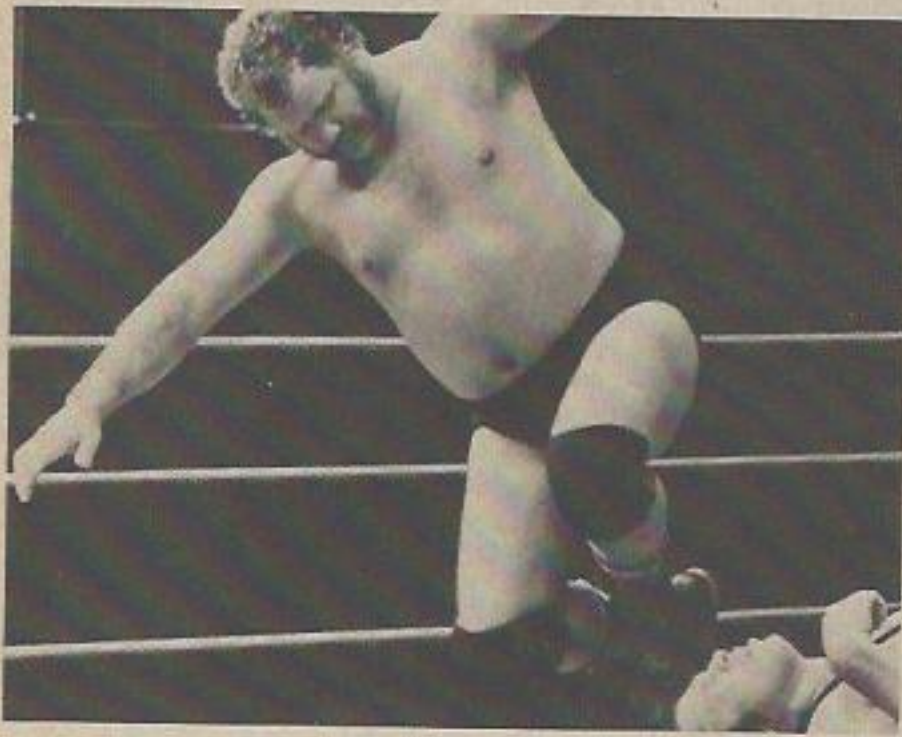
are not yet champions. You are splitting your time too much between managing yourselves and wrestling, but one thing you must always remember is to never, never, never let that scum of a manager Arnold "The Pig" Skoaland near you because that is the surest way to your own personal athletic destruction as sure as my name is Captain Louis Albano, captain of champions.

So I hope you understand what I am saying to you two, Jesse and Adrian, because I am your key to

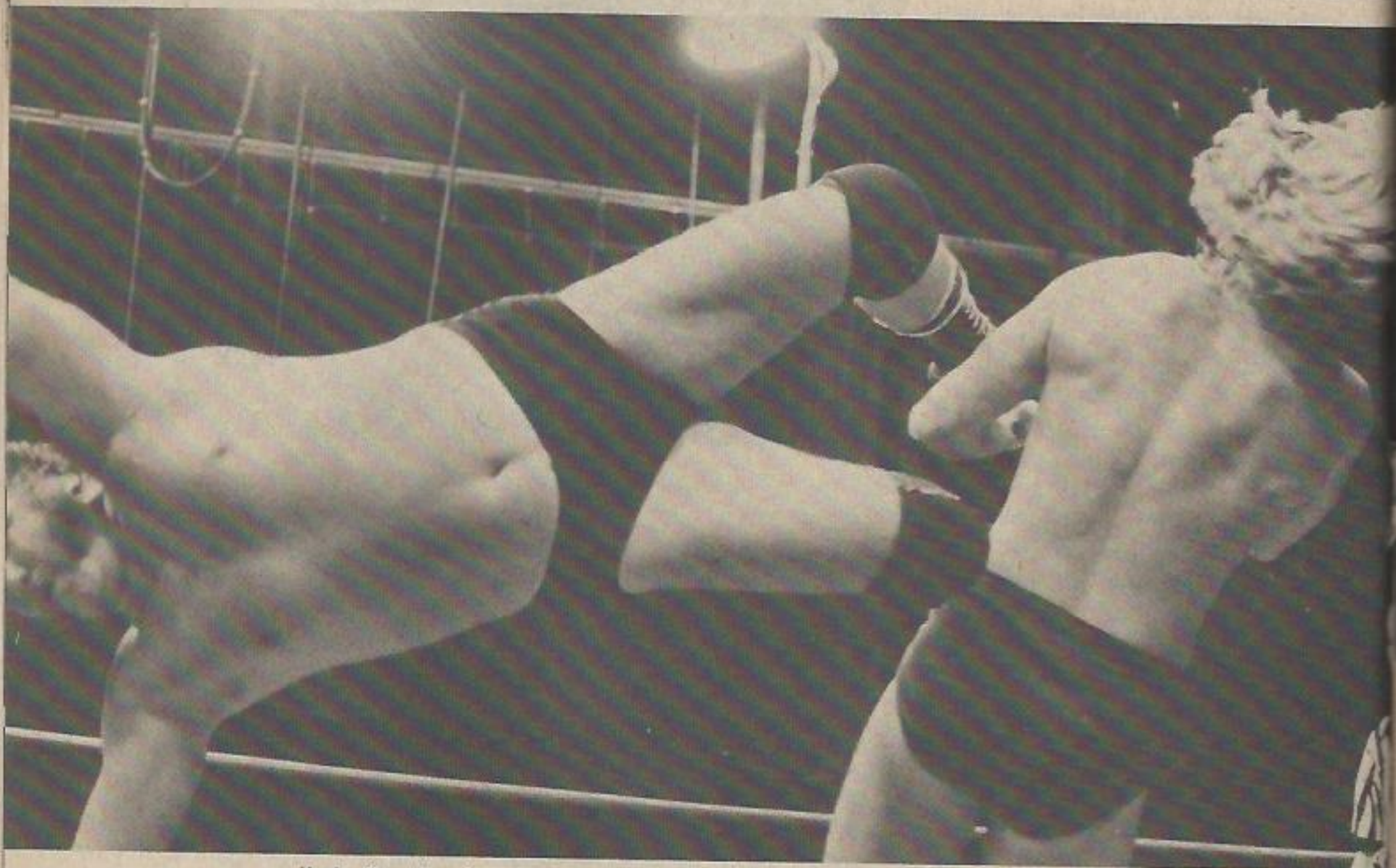
success, whether you decide to take me up as a manager, which of course is your best possible move that you both could make in your wrestling careers, or whether you decide to go with another manager here in the WWF, or if you just decide to go it alone.

I hope you have read this open letter carefully, because I know you are the stuff of champions, and when you get here you'll have the championship belts around your waists, and that's the bottom line of where you two should be. □

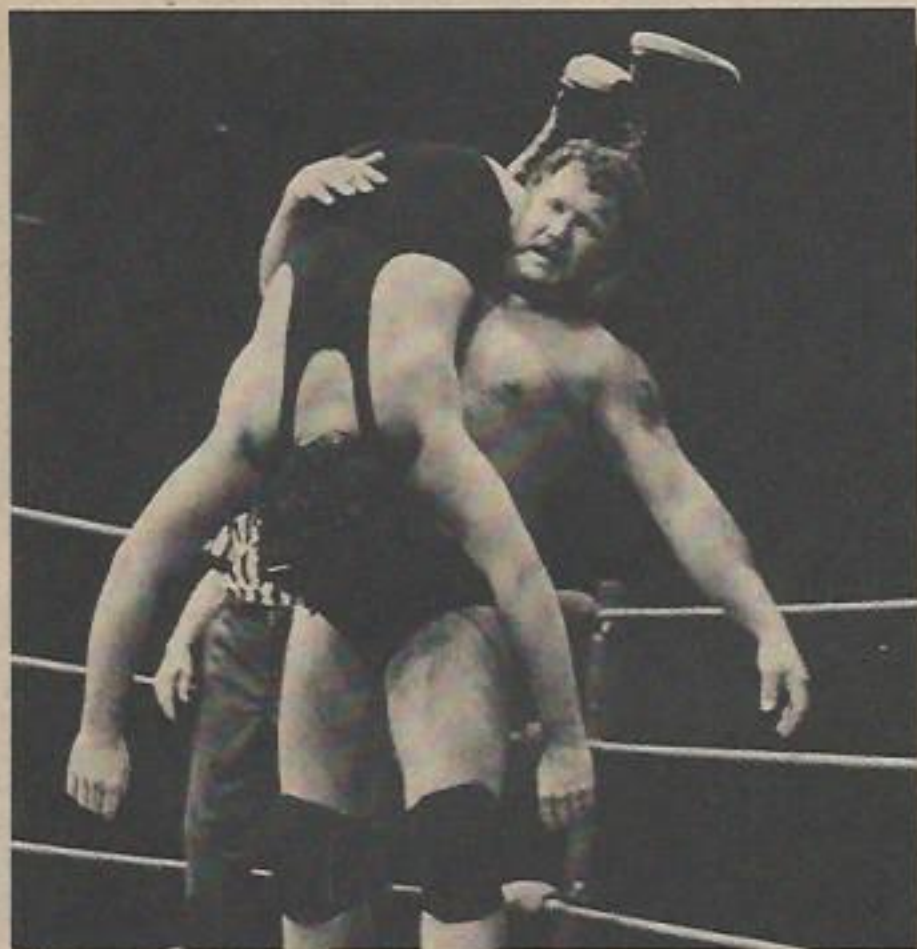
HARLEY RACE:



THE LONG ROAD



Harley Race is using average and below average wrestlers as experimental subjects in his quest to regain the NWA title.



PHOTOS BY
BILL APTER

BACK

HARLEY RACE KNEW that there was something wrong when he lost his title to Dusty Rhodes. He knew that there were elements in his wrestling style that needed to be altered and modified, or perhaps simply refined. He also knew that to do this, to become the kind of wrestler he knew he had to be in order to regain the title from Rhodes, he would have to scrap everything and begin again at square one.

"Well, when I lost the title to that lump Rhodes, I knew that I had probably sunk as low as any man can sink in this sport," said Race. "You know, I was actually pretty ashamed that I lost to Rhodes. I mean, let's be serious.

It's like losing a wrestling match to your grandmother, you know? He has that much skill!

"Anyway," continued Race, "I realized that I had to do something to get back into championship shape. I decided to do it all over again from scratch, just as if I was starting out as a newcomer, a rookie, and work out my style and refine my techniques using that kind of an approach."

Race's new approach, his first steps on the long road back to wrestling's most coveted championship throne, brought him recently to St. Louis for matches against a long series of preliminary wrestlers.

"Frankly, it's almost too easy

here in St. Louis," Race explained, "but there are certain things a guy has to do. You see, when you're building up yourself as a wrestler, aiming for the top, what you've got to do is begin at the bottom and work your way up the ladder. Each new opponent is more difficult than the last. That way, when you finally start facing the really tough people, the wrestlers that are likely to give you some trouble, you're prepared."

But working his way through the lower echelons of wrestling's participants offers more than just easy wins for Harley Race.

"I also find that when I go up

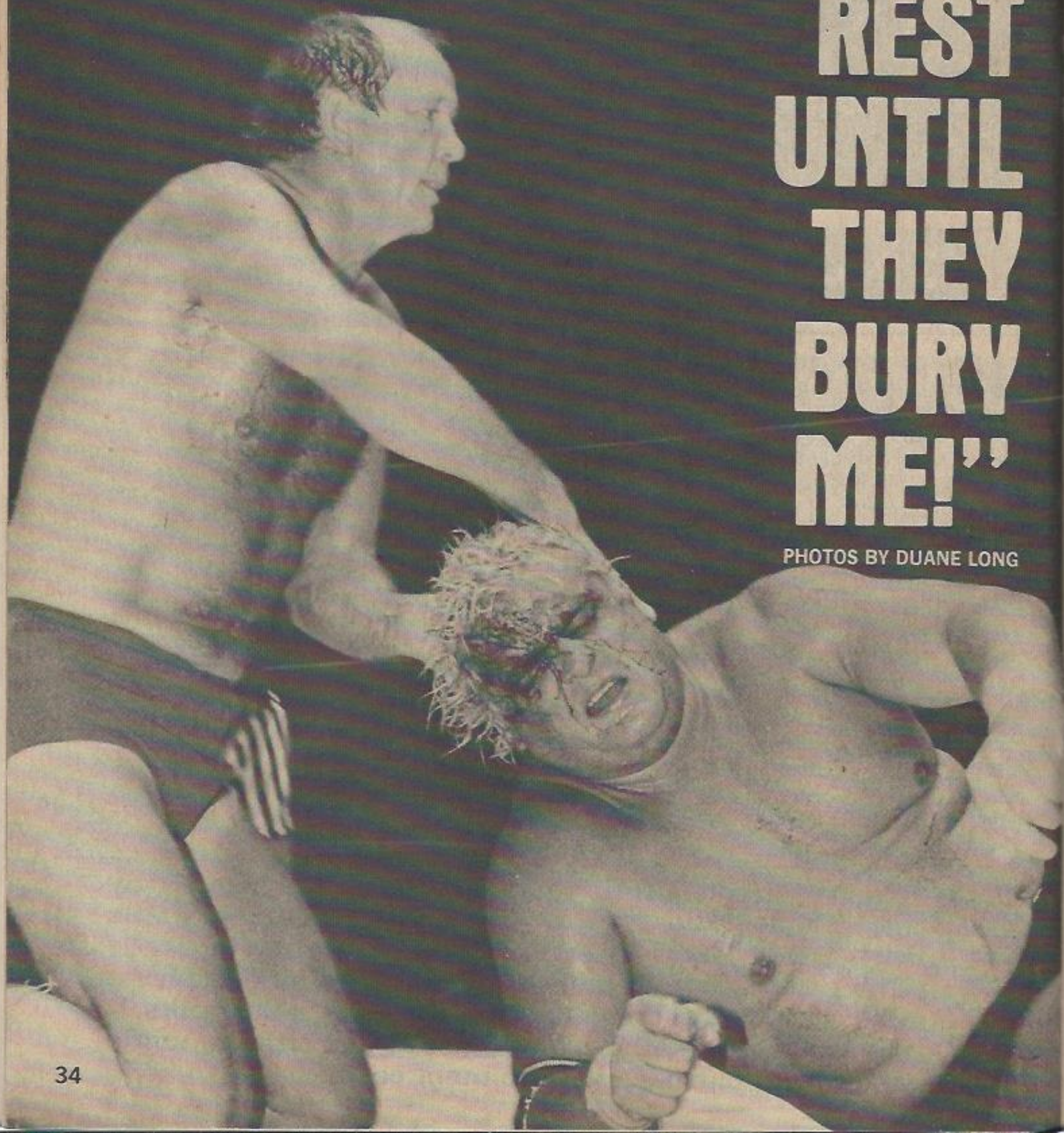
(Continued on page 58)

Former NWA champion Harley Race: dethroned by Dusty Rhodes and now determined to regain his title once more. Instead of striking up an immediate title challenge, Harley Race has chosen a much different course: start from scratch and work through the ranks. It is the longest possible road back to the title he could have chosen, but perhaps the most certain

**The American Dream's
Recurring Nightmare:**

**"THE FUNKS WON'T
REST
UNTIL
THEY
BURY
ME!"**

PHOTOS BY DUANE LONG





Terry Funk tries to choke the life from Rhodes during a Texas Bullrope Match (above). In one of wrestling's most notorious sneak-attacks, Terry breaks Dusty's arm, causing him to lose the NWA title after only a five-day reign in 1979 (right). Brother Dory yanks Dusty to the canvas by his hair (opposite left).



A horrible vision of continual, endless torture. Is it a sign from Dusty Rhodes' subconscious being that he should beware of the Funks, that he should take more extreme care against them. But the nightmare continues, and the Dream can't do anything to stop it

TERRY FUNK'S VOICE boomed out from the television set. There was fiery hate in his eyes, as there was in Dusty Rhodes' eyes. Dusty was watching at home, and what he saw did not please him one bit.

"It was a black day for wrestling," cried Terry Funk, "a black day indeed. When that blimp Dusty heaved himself off the top rope on top of Harley Race to win the title, Frank Gotch, Strangler Lewis, George Hackenschmidt... all the late greats of this sport rolled over in their graves!"

Dusty spat on the floor, disgusted. "Bah! Who does that

maniac think he is?" With an angry flick of the wrist, Dusty turned off his television and went to bed for what he hoped would be a peaceful night of rest. He did not bargain on the fact that his sleep would once again be disturbed by another one of the horrible nightmares that have been haunting his recent nights.

This night, the horrifying images of what Terry Funk had said on television played Dusty's sleep. It was a nightmare that would be repeated again and again. Lately, Dusty had been having dreams about the NWA title and about the Funks, but never had they taken on

such a ghoulish character as now.

It is night, and there is mist clinging to the mossy ground near the graveyard. Dusty shivers a bit from the cool air... he is wearing nothing but his wrestling trunks and his championship belt.

Suddenly, Terry and Dory Funk Jr.'s voices ring out in unison: "No more a champ, Dusty, never again!"

Dusty reels around to where the voices were—nothing. Again the voices of the Funks call to him: "Beware, Dusty, your reign is doomed."

Turning quickly, Dusty gives a yell of surprise and horror. For
(Continued on page 62)

Mighty Igor-Hulk Hogan Clash:



**A BATTLE OF STRENGTH,
A BATTLE OF WILL**

PHOTOS BY
BILL OTTEN

FOR YEARS, THIS battle of titans has been brewing. When you have two strongmen like Polish superstar Mighty Igor and the incredible Hulk Hogan, it is inevitable that someday at sometime the two must pit their strength against one another in a massive battle of muscle against muscle.

Recently, in Orlando, Florida,

millions of beautiful women all over the world.

"Igor thinks he's strong because he only goes up against weaklings," accused Hogan. "When you're always fighting puny punks, of course you're gonna look like a big wheel. Well, his wheel is gonna have a flat tire when I'm through with him, because in the perfection of Hulk Hogan, Mighty Igor has



The ferocity, the power, the will, all shown on these pages, display what happens when two of wrestling's biggest titans clash. The match would have been a classic had Hogan not ended it with an illegal kick.

the inevitable became a reality as Mighty Igor met Hulk Hogan in perhaps the most savage test of strength this state has seen in recent years.

On both sides of this confrontation there existed a soul-deep willingness to prove to the opposition one's physical superiority.

"Mighty Igor is a mighty nothing," roared Hulk Hogan. "He doesn't even begin to display the perfect muscle structures and awesome physical characteristics that make me the heartthrob of

met his match."

Prior to his match with Hulk Hogan, Mighty Igor was relatively calm when compared to the vocally arrogant demeanor of his opponent. A good-natured man, Igor tends to take things in stride . . . except when he is in the ring.

"What is Hulk's problem?" asked Igor's manager, Ivan Kalmikoff. "Sometimes I think his head is full of kielbasa scraps. He always talks about how pretty he is, but never how he wrestles. Okay, so Hulk is strong . . . big deal. His breath is strong, too. His

problem is that he just doesn't know how to wrestle, he just knows how to blow out a lot of hot air.

"Now Igor . . . he works hard, he trains hard. He doesn't spend his training time playing with movies and trying to be big shot. He works on wrestling. Hogan . . . he spends too much time trying to be a big shot when all he really is is a little fizzle. You wait and see, Igor will show everyone what Hogan is really like."

As the two wrestlers entered the ring, the crowd appeared ready for

It was a brutal battle of the titans. Muscle pitted against muscle as the Mighty Igor met Hulk Hogan in a match which was more than just another test of strength. It was a match where the loser would have to take a back seat to the powerful abilities of the other man. Neither wrestler was ready to make that kind of concession

the match of muscle which was to follow. For his part, Hogan began the evening by offering a few muscle flexes to the crowd. An impressive display of muscle development, perhaps, but hardly a demonstration of wrestling skill

and agility. Igor, on the other hand, was ready to get right down to business.

Igor lunged at Hogan, clamping his meaty fist around Hogan's neck muscles. As Hogan struggled to break free, he brought his arms

around and under Igor's arm, breaking the hold and placing the mighty Pole in an excruciatingly painful armlock.

Once Igor broke free of this hold, he quickly became the aggressor, applying an eye-bulging bearhug on Hogan. The Hulk struggled to break free, finally doing so after considerable difficulty.

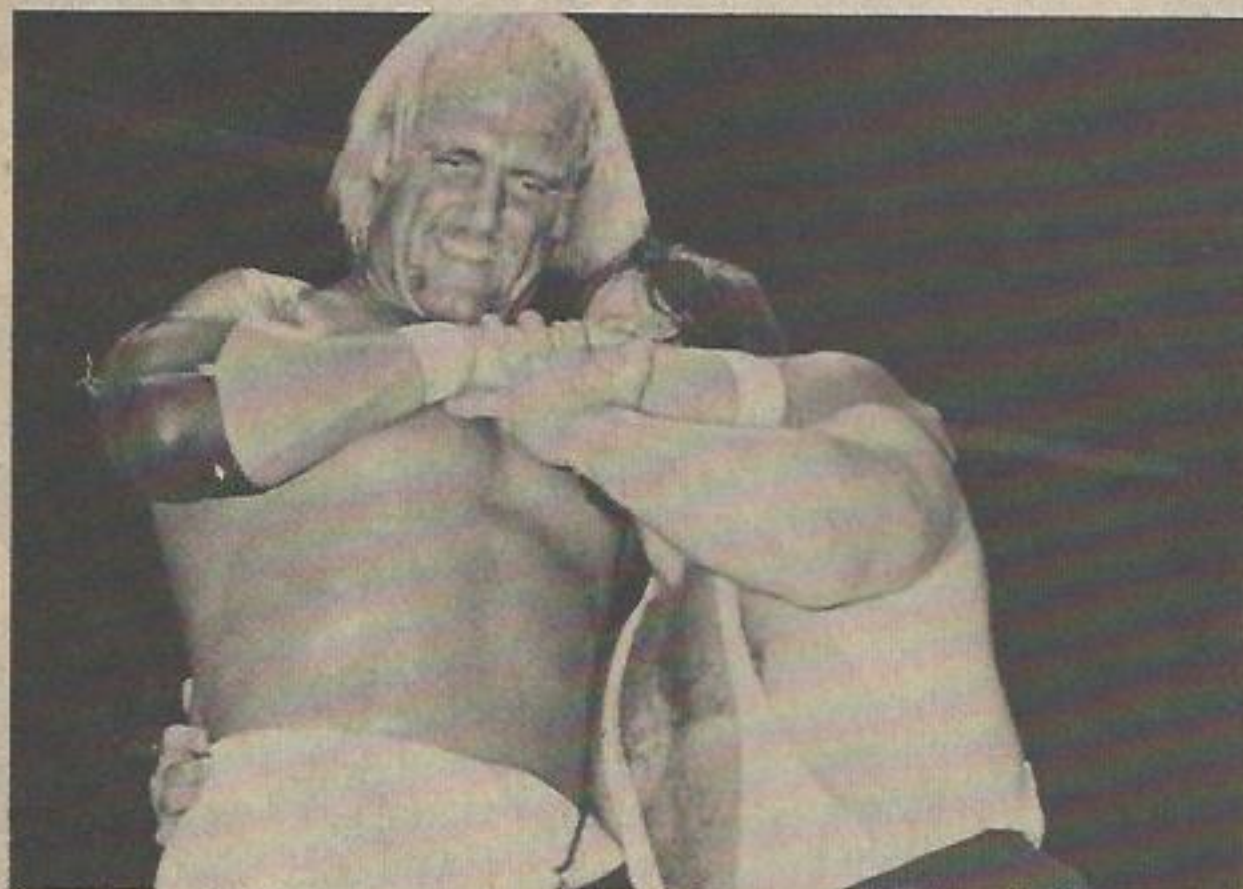
The match continued interminably in this way: bearhug followed by headlock followed by armlock followed by another bearhug. Strength was the issue here, pure and simple. There was no acrobatics, no fancy maneuvers. Just raw muscle pitted against raw muscle. For a long time, it appeared to be a standoff.

Suddenly, out of apparent frustration due to the fact that neither man was gaining a clear advantage in the match, Hogan broke away from Igor and planted his foot at what could best be described as a below-the-belt location. Immediate disqualification for Hogan was declared.

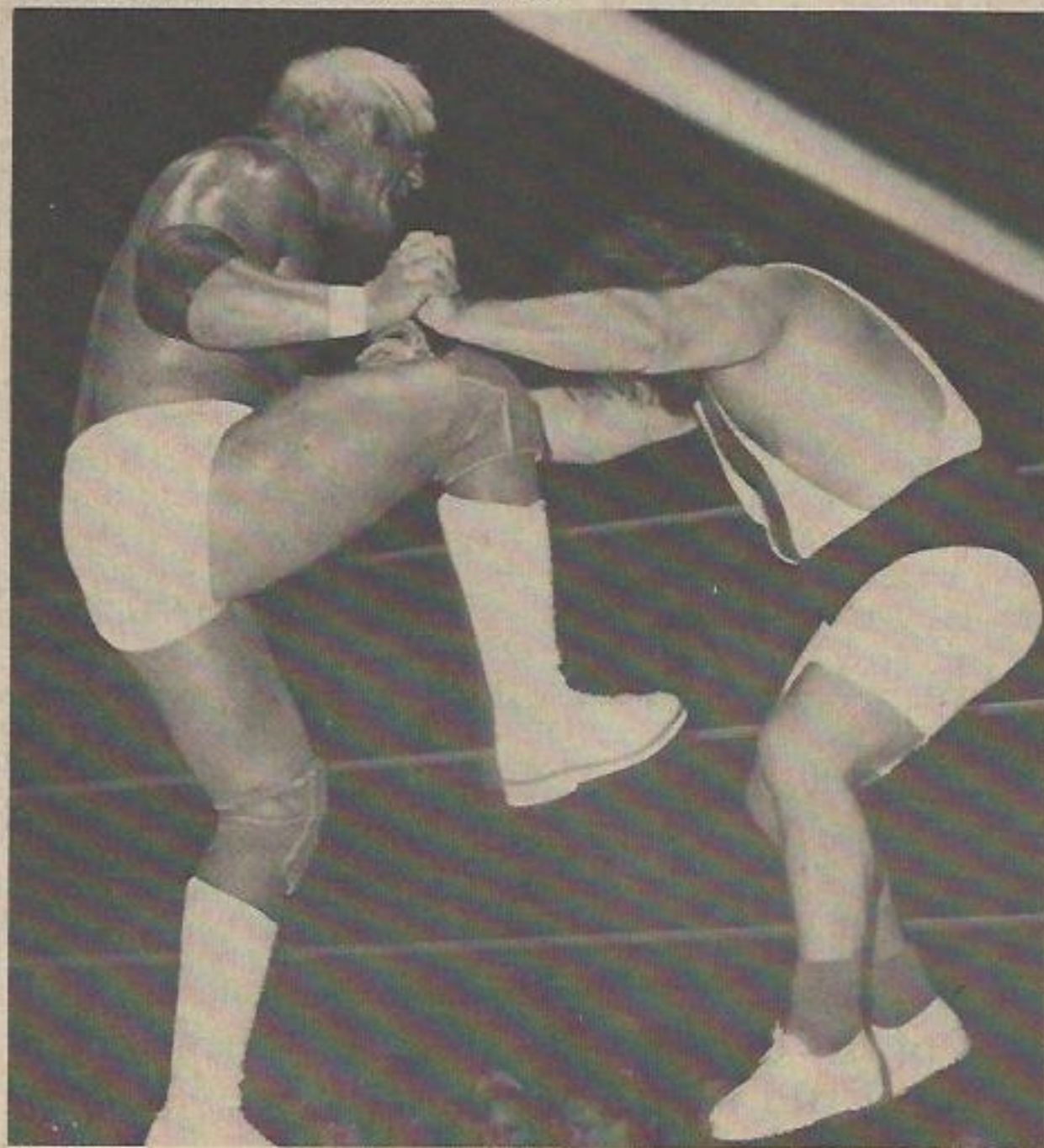
"You see? You see what kind of man is Hogan?" asked an incredulous Igor. "Never in life have I seen such a sleazy man. Never in life would I think anyone stoop so low as that *paskudniak* Hogan. *Sveniak!* I don't believe what I see tonight. By his own action, Hulk shows people what he made of: pig dropping in summertime. He should not be allowed in ring ever again."

Igor was disgusted, and rightly so. Unfortunately, Hulk Hogan was unavailable for comment following the match. Clearly, though, Hogan was unable to withstand the pressure of a match that was too even to call, and felt that he had to strike out in some sort of unorthodox manner. That he did.

Perhaps someday these two powerhouses will meet again. Perhaps then the fans will be able to judge, without disqualifications, who the strongest of these titans truly is. □



Hogan tries his headlock on Igor, but it doesn't have too much of an effect due to Igor's resistance (above). The kick to the groin area that ended it all (below). The two never proved which one was the better man.



SNUKA VS. STEAMBOAT



10,000 MILES TO SETTLE A FEUD

TEN THOUSAND MILES. It would take you nearly 10 days of continuous driving . . . 10 days without sleep . . . to travel 10,000 miles.

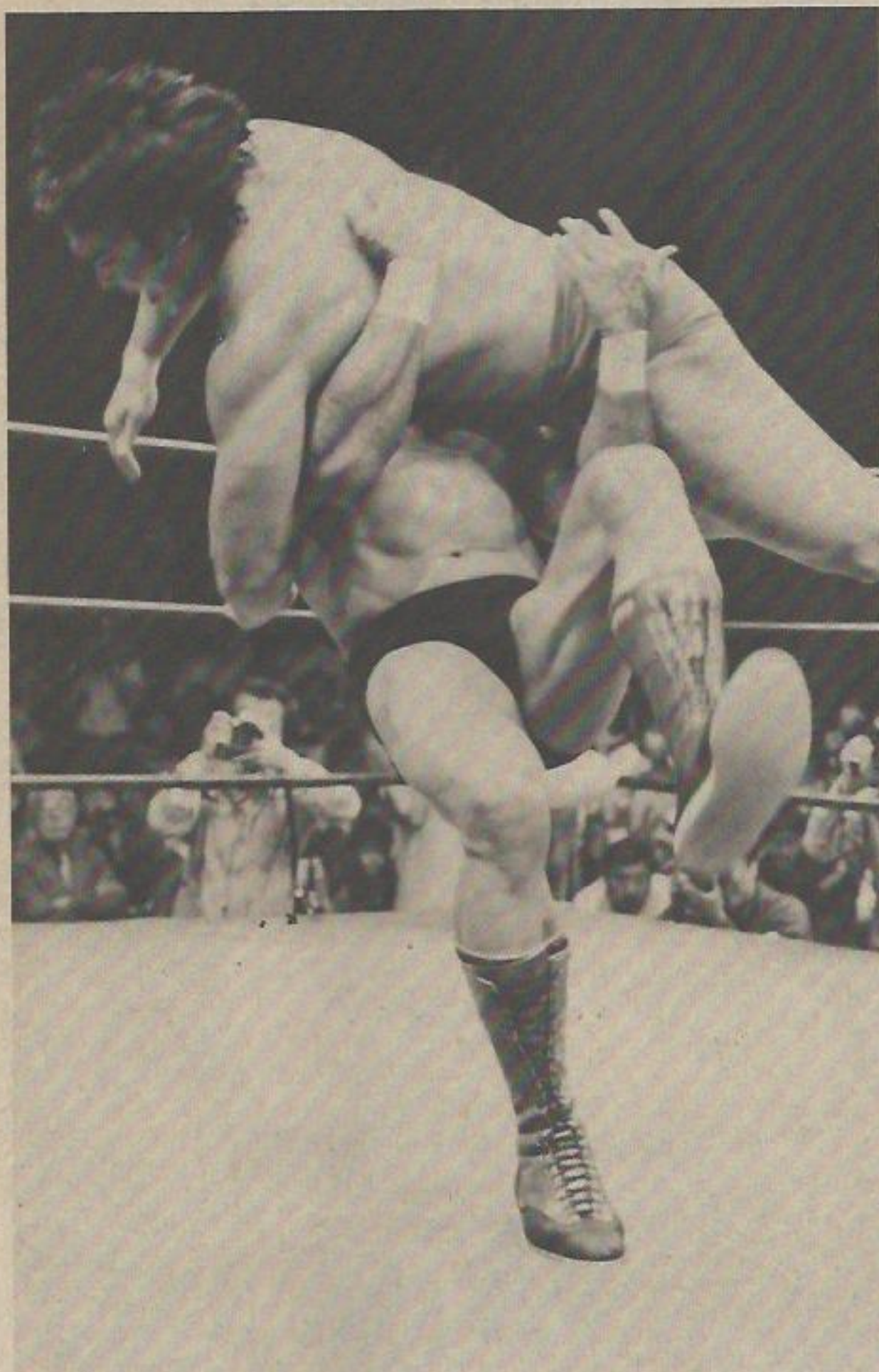
Ten thousand miles. Travel from New York to California, back to New York, and back to California again . . . and you've still got another 1,000 miles to go to bring

your tally up to 10,000.

Ten thousand miles. Halfway around the world. It's the distance that Jimmy Snuka traveled to allegedly escape from the wrestling

It grew in the Mid-Atlantic and stretched its despicable arms 10,000 miles to encompass an entire globe. Halfway around the world, the bitter hatred between Jimmy Snuka and Rick Steamboat continued to grow. In Tokyo, as well as in the United States, wrestling fans gazed breathlessly as their feud reached unmatched heights of intensity

PHOTOS BY KOICHI YOSHIKAWA



If he could, he'd run away from wrestling altogether, but since he's such an incompetent wrestler, that would make too much sense."

Jimmy Snuka was enraged by Steamboat's remarks, and he was not about to let Steamboat get away with it.

"Rick Steamboat is a lying scum of the earth," shouted Jimmy Snuka. "He knows as well as anyone else in the entire sport of wrestling that I traveled here to Tokyo under a special invitation from Japan's wrestling officials. I consider it a tremendous honor to be able to wrestle for these people, and would consider it an even greater honor if I were to totally



Steamboat flattens Snuka with a cross-body block (left) and positions his head for a devastating kneelift (above).

clutches of Rick Steamboat. It is also the distance Steamboat traveled to assure that there would be no escape for Jimmy Snuka.

"That's right, Jimmy Snuka is afraid of me," claimed Rick Steamboat. "He ran scared, and he ran fast. Everyone knows how long our feud has been going on in the Mid-Atlantic, everyone knows that I'm the better wrestler. Snuka realized it too, and he finally decided to do something about it. He ran all the way to Japan with his tail between his cowardly legs.

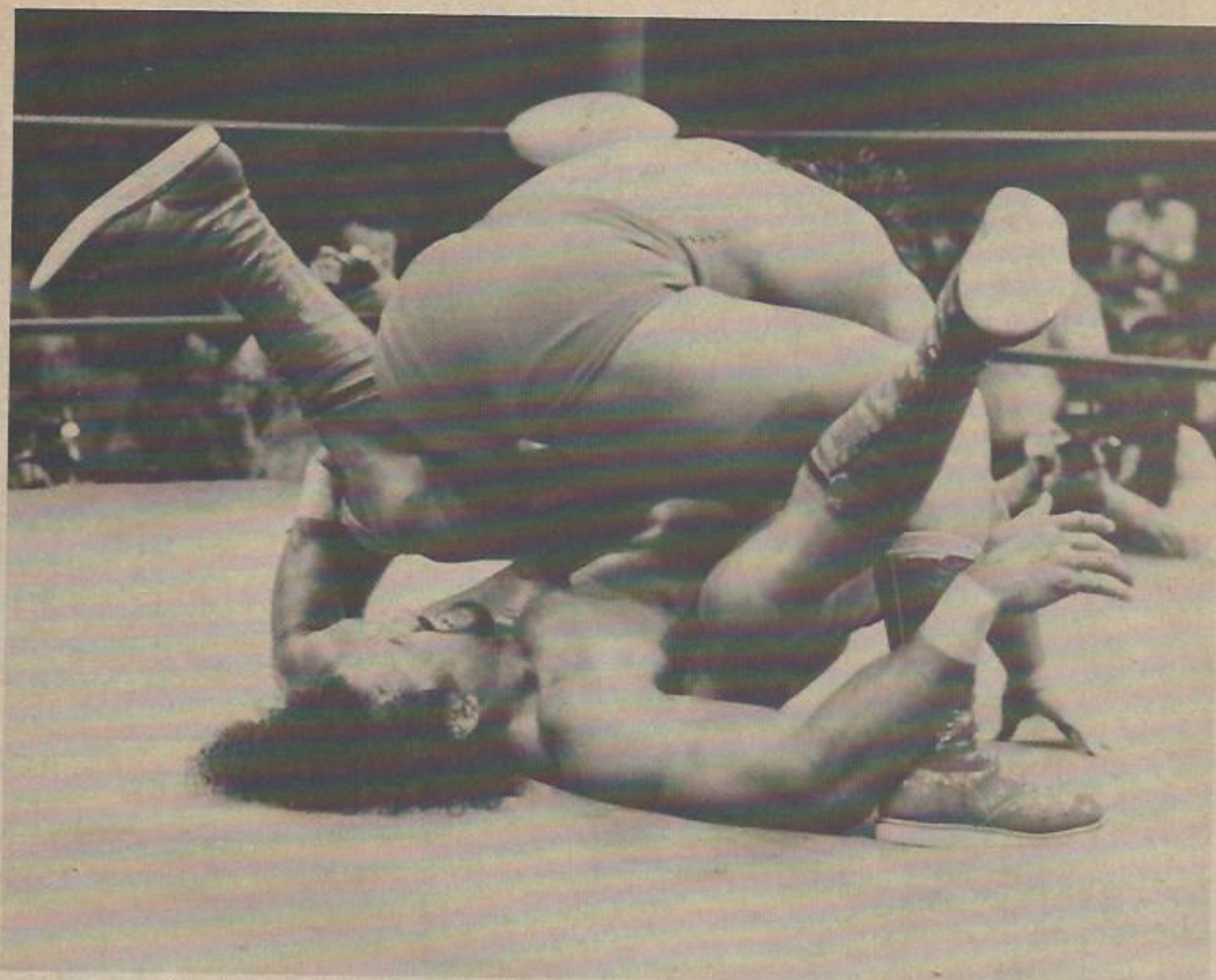
Well, if he ever thought that running away would put an end to our feud, he thought twice about it when he learned that I was in Japan, too.

"I hate to see any man run scared," Steamboat continued, "but in the case of Snuka, I have to admit that I'm hardly surprised. It's the sort of thing I've come to expect from that sleazy low-life. It's the kind of ridiculous excuse for mature behavior that has characterized Snuka's entire history in the Mid-Atlantic region.

cripple Steamboat here!

"It's a shocking insult," continued Snuka, "to both myself and to the Japanese people—fans and officials alike—to say what he has said. It makes a mockery of the gracious invitation I received, and as far as I'm concerned, it only proves to the world how stupid Steamboat actually is."

The Tokyo wrestling fans, far from being insulted by the comments of the two wrestlers, were instead treated to a display of wrestling prowess and skill infused



Steamboat, who claims to have followed Snuka halfway around the world for this match, attempts a reverse cradle. Though Snuka escaped, he was later disqualified for bringing a chair into the ring.

with brutal anger that only the prolonged rivalry between Snuka and Steamboat could have spawned.

At one point, Snuka attacked Steamboat, readying himself to execute a stunning dropkick. Steamboat anticipated the move, however, and turned Snuka's ferocious anger against himself by nimbly sidestepping his flying opponent.

Angered more than hurt, Snuka grabbed a chair from out of the audience and proceeded to use it to attack Rick. Again, Rick was too fast, utilizing his knowledge of karate and kung fu to disarm Snuka and toss the chair harmlessly aside and out of the ring. Snuka was disqualified for his act of aggression.

"That shows you what kind of

man—no, make that what kind of an animal—that Jimmy Snuka is," said Rick Steamboat following his match with Snuka. "To blatantly go into the audience and grab a chair is probably the most absurd move a wrestler can make. It doesn't take any skill to bash something like a chair over the head of another person. That should prove to every reader of this magazine what I've been saying all along, that Jimmy Snuka is a no-talent excuse for a wrestler.

"I don't care how far I have to travel to prove it, either," continued Steamboat. "If Snuka decides now to run to Australia, I'll follow him there. If he runs to England, I'll follow him there. If he runs to the Mid-Atlantic, I'll

follow him there. I want Snuka put on notice here and now: there is no escape, Jimmy-boy, and don't ever kid yourself into believing that there is any place on this earth that you can hide from me. Because it is my sacred duty to prove to all the world what a coward and a cheat you are. I'll drive you from the sport of wrestling if it's the last thing I do."

As for Jimmy Snuka, he was surprisingly calm upon hearing the determined words of Steamboat. He merely sat in his chair thoughtfully for a minute and then softly declared, "You're quite right, Steamboat. It actually may be the last thing you ever do. I'd be careful, if I were you, mighty careful." □

Beyond the Squared Circle



St. Louis promoter Sam Muchnick has been at it for 36 years!



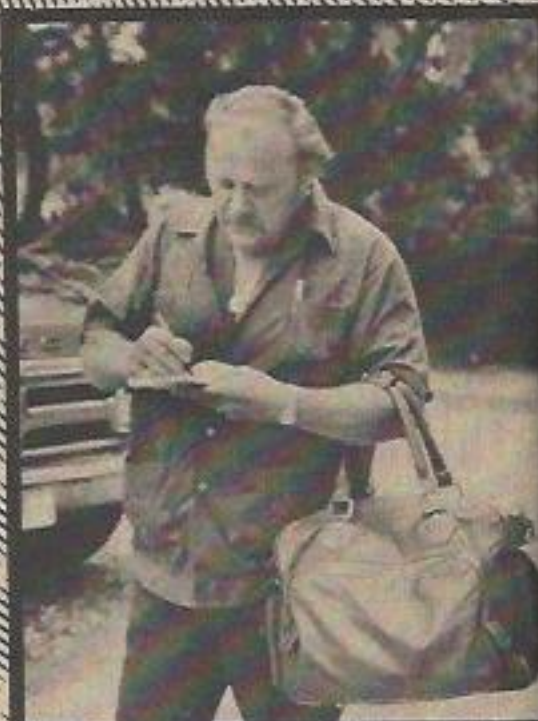
Killer Khan with two of his closest confidants—manager Fred Blassie and a former advisor, the sly Mr. Hatori.



Sir Oliver Humperdink poses with TV comic Andy Kauffman.



Bobby "Hangman" Jagers and his cousin R.T. "The Avalanche" Tyler keep informed by reading recent editions of PRO WRESTLING ILLUSTRATED. "They are great magazines because we're usually in them," says Jagers.



Rarely will Bulldog Brower sign an autograph for a fan. "Ah, what the heck," he said. "Give the little brat a thrill."



A skeleton in the locker!? A prank played by someone on the "King" Jerry Lawler.



Sika the Samoan—you've got the magazine upside down! He doesn't seem to care too much!



NWA champion Dusty Rhodes has dinner on an airplane en route to a title defense in Florida.



Broadcaster John Auble interviews Ken Patera in a St. Louis gym for "P.M. Magazine." The former Olympic weightlifter impressed all present with amazing feats of strength.



WWF President Hisashi Shinma watches the matches at Madison Square Garden.

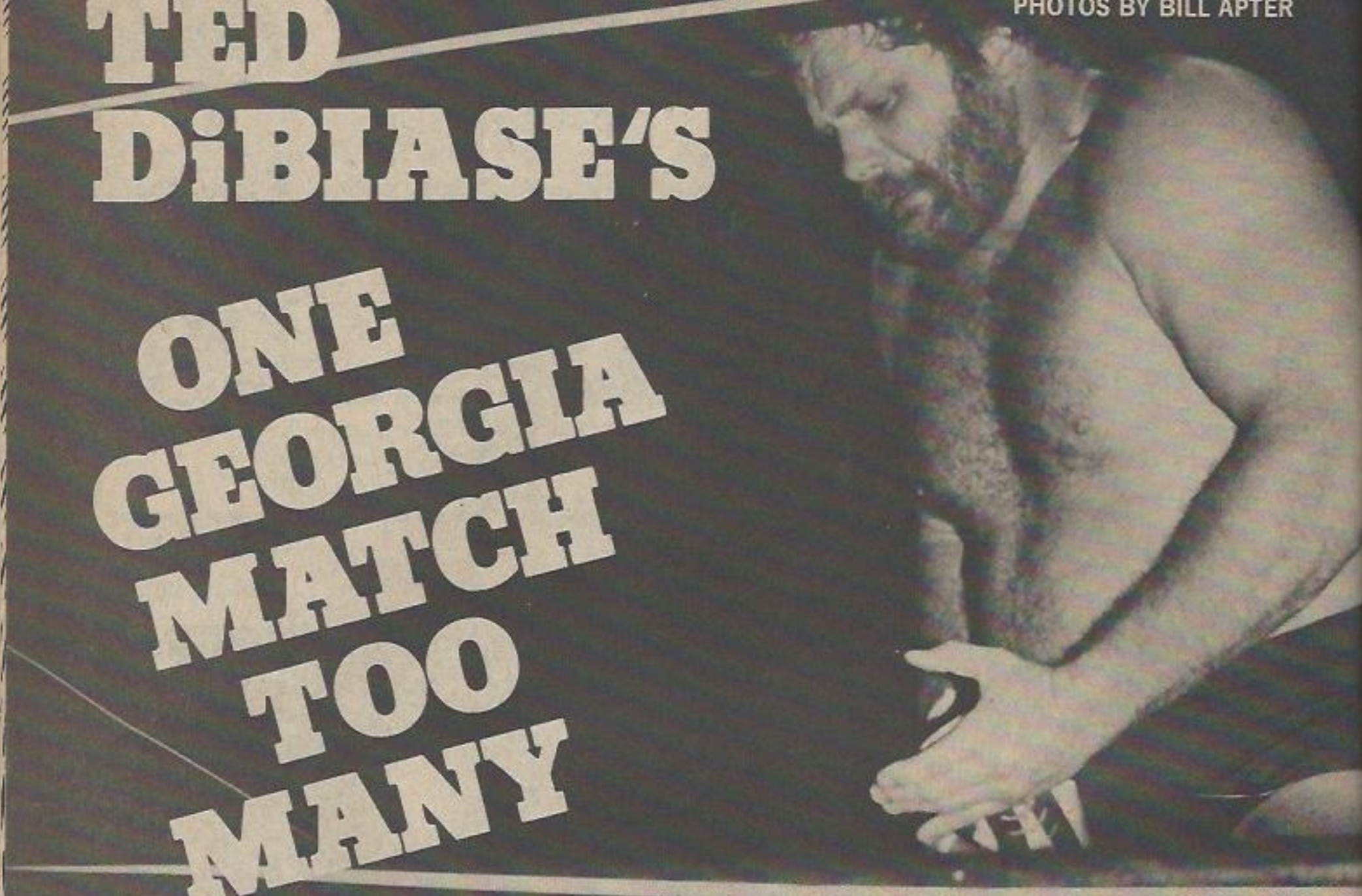
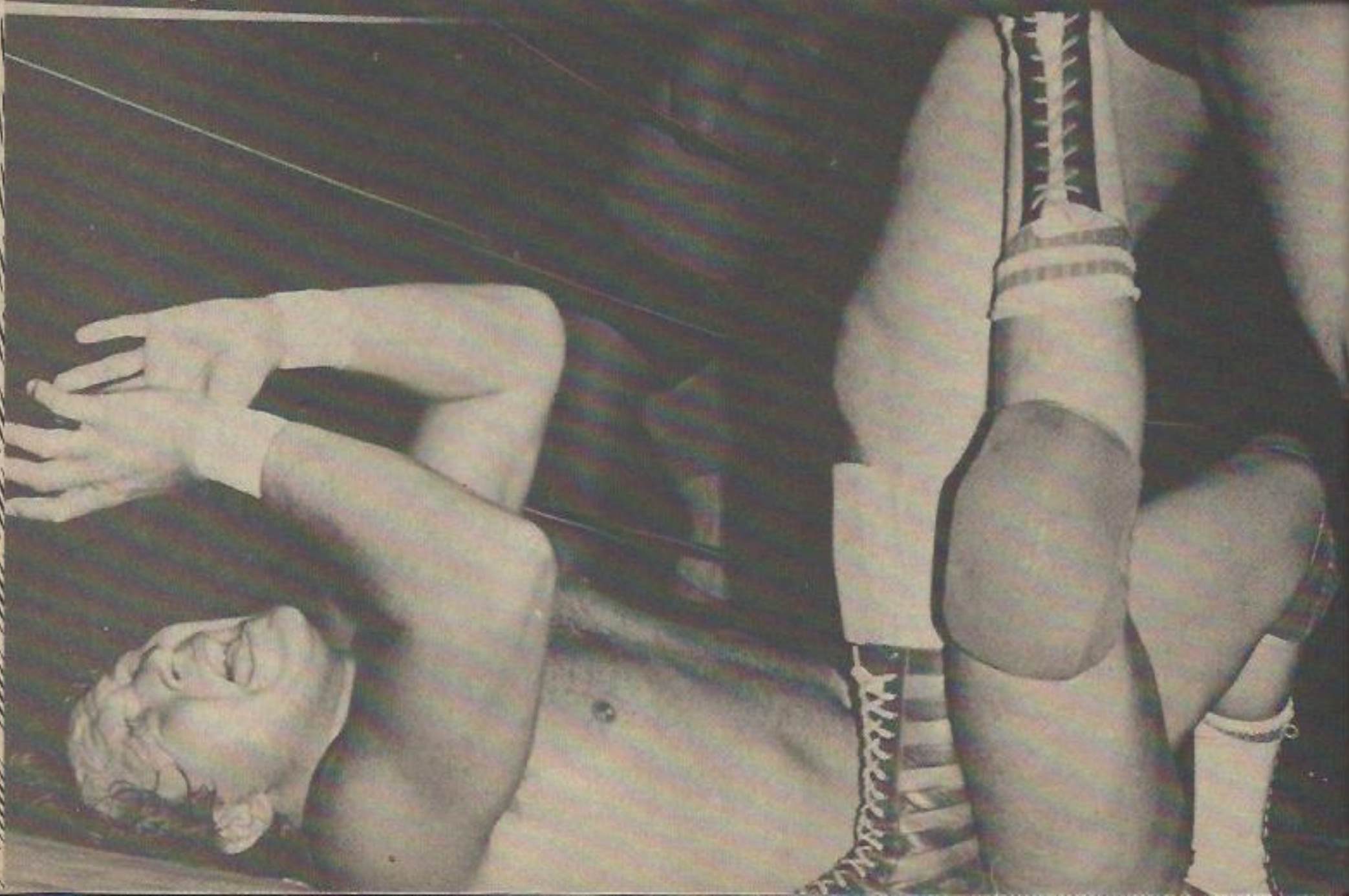


A dressing room chat between three old friends—Pedro Morales, Dominic DeNucci, and Bruno Sammartino. The three often share notes on how they should handle certain grapplers.

TED DiBIASE'S

PHOTOS BY BILL APTER

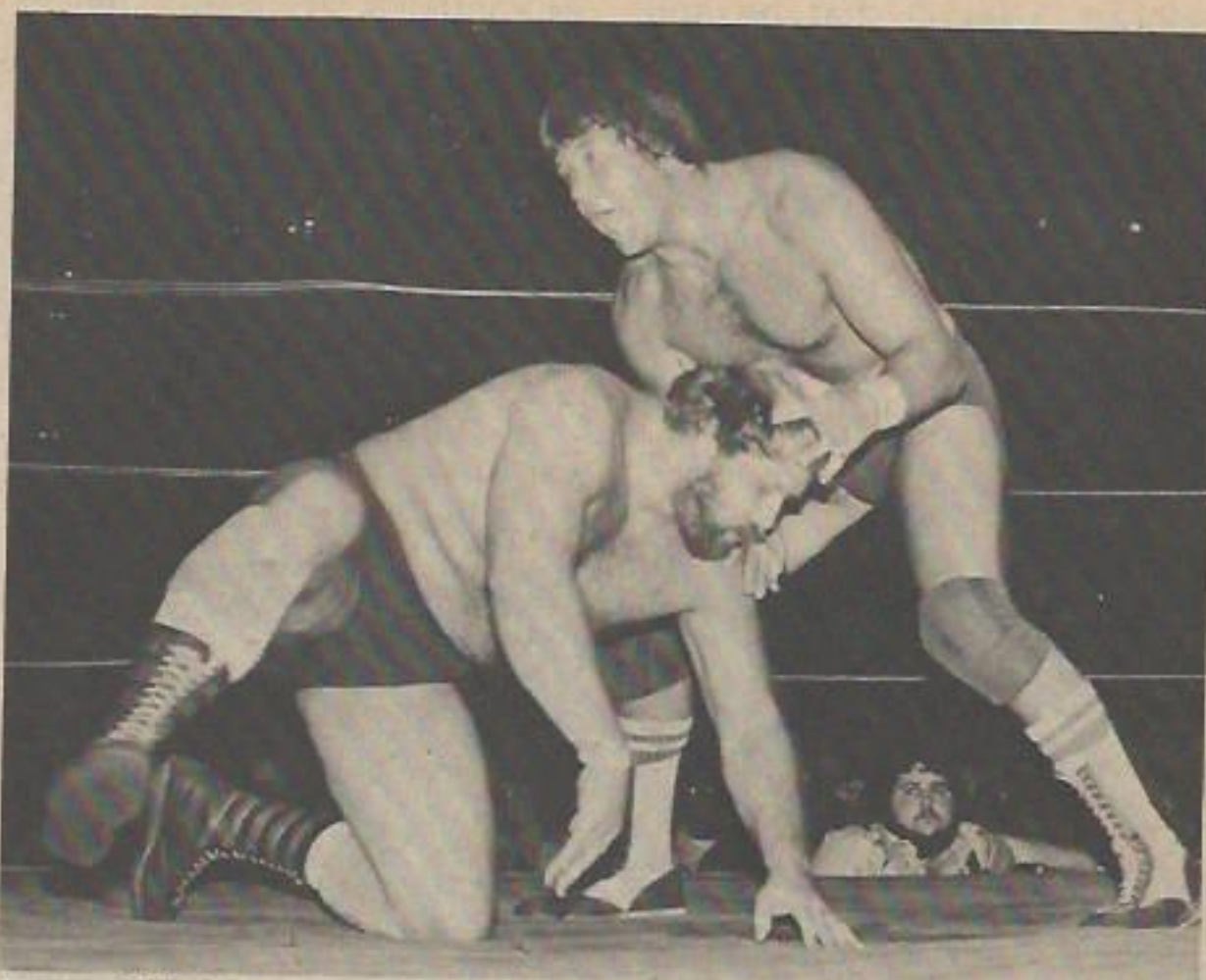
ONE
GEORGIA
MATCH
TOO
MANY



TED DiBIASE LOVES to wrestle. Each time he steps into the ring it's a test of himself against himself, almost as much as it is himself against whatever opponent he happens to be facing that day.

"The challenge is incredible," explained DiBiase. "I find that each time I enter the ring I'm pushing myself to the limits of my abilities. I find that the further I push, the better I become. The better I become, the further I can push. It's a continual process that never stops. I don't think I'll ever get too much action in the ring."

Ted's words proved to be drastically prophetic recently in Atlanta as he suffered a horrible humiliation at the hands of the Andersons while wrestling in a



In one of his few good moments in the match, DiBiase takes the advantage over Ole Anderson (above). Ted was not well rested, and it shows, as Ole takes control (opposite left).

When Steve O phoned Ted DiBiase and informed him that he had set up a last-minute match between them and the Andersons, Ted DiBiase jumped at the opportunity. The only problem was that DiBiase had just wrestled in another match that afternoon. The physical challenge was almost too much, though the offer was one he could not refuse. There was a price to pay

tag team with Steve O.

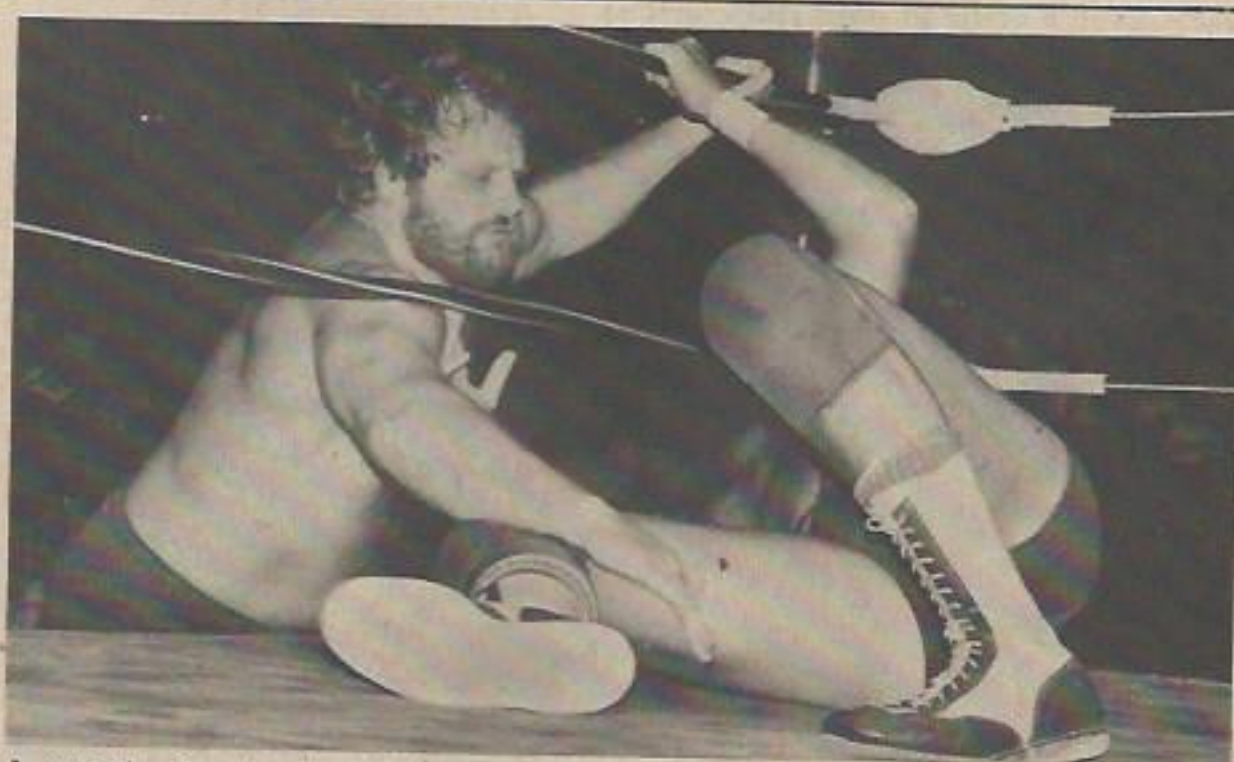
The afternoon of his tag team match, Ted had wrestled another match . . . in Louisiana! That afternoon, Ted went up against Crazy Luke Graham.

"He is quite a maniac," said DiBiase, "but I was able to take care of him in the usual DiBiase style! He did give me a run for my money, though."

Following his match with Graham, DiBiase received a telephone call in his dressing room. It was long time friend and fellow grappler, Steve O.

"Ted, what's going on?" cried Steve, who was calling from Atlanta. "How goes your matches in Louisiana? Listen, buddy, how soon can you be here in Atlanta?"

DiBiase considered the



A wrestler has to be at the peak of his physical capability while wrestling the Andersons, as Ted found out the hard way.

question. His reply noted the fact that yes, he could make it there by evening. Steve O was delighted.

"Fantastic, Ted! Okay, listen,

I've got us set up against the Andersons tonight, so get yourself psyched up, okay? See you soon."

DiBiase hung up the

receiver, excited that he and Steve O were going to face the Andersons for the NWA tag team championship. Not only that, but to wrestle once again in Georgia was a thrilling prospect.

"I love the Georgia fans," explained DiBiase. "They've always been good to me, and I always like to go back there and wrestle for them."

Exhausted from his match that afternoon, and tired as well from the speedy commute to Atlanta and the high-speed pace of the entire day, DiBiase was running on pure adrenaline as he prepared to enter the Atlanta ring with Steve O.

The match . . . well, it would be enough to say that the match was an embarrassment to DiBiase, but that doesn't give

justice to the mayhem that the Andersons were able to unleash that night in Atlanta.

For the most part, Steve O was kept out of the ring by the Andersons, who concentrated on tackling DiBiase, quite often as a two-on-one combination. They apparently knew what Ted had been through that afternoon and were attempting to capitalize on that situation.

Late in the match, during a two Andersons vs. one DiBiase pileup, the referee disqualified the Andersons for what was termed an "illegal infraction of the tag team rules."

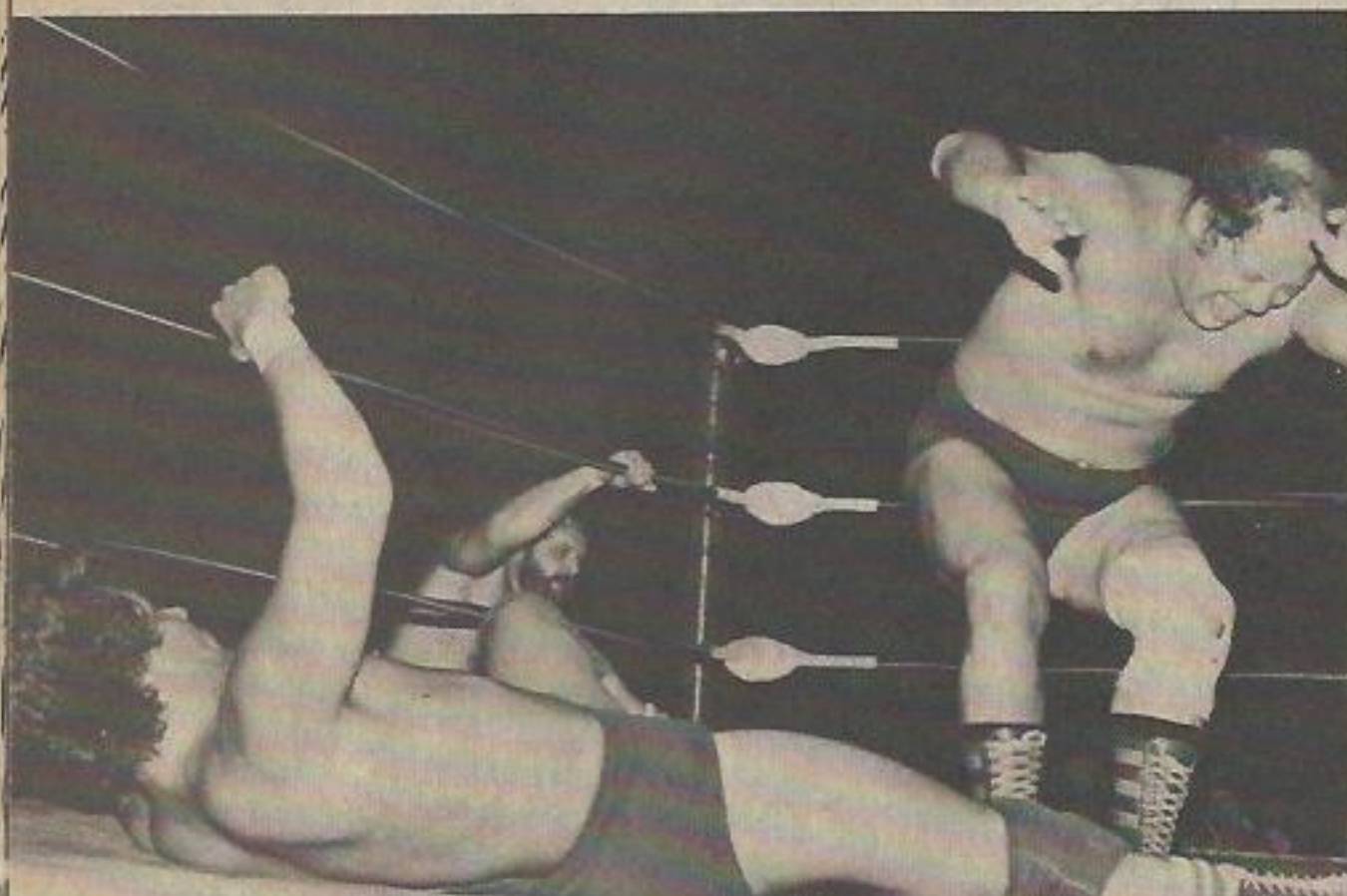
Staggering out of the ring, DiBiase didn't acknowledge the cries of the crowd, and hardly even noticed Steve O when the latter wrestler came up to him and attempted to converse.

Two days later, DiBiase was willing to speak about the episode.

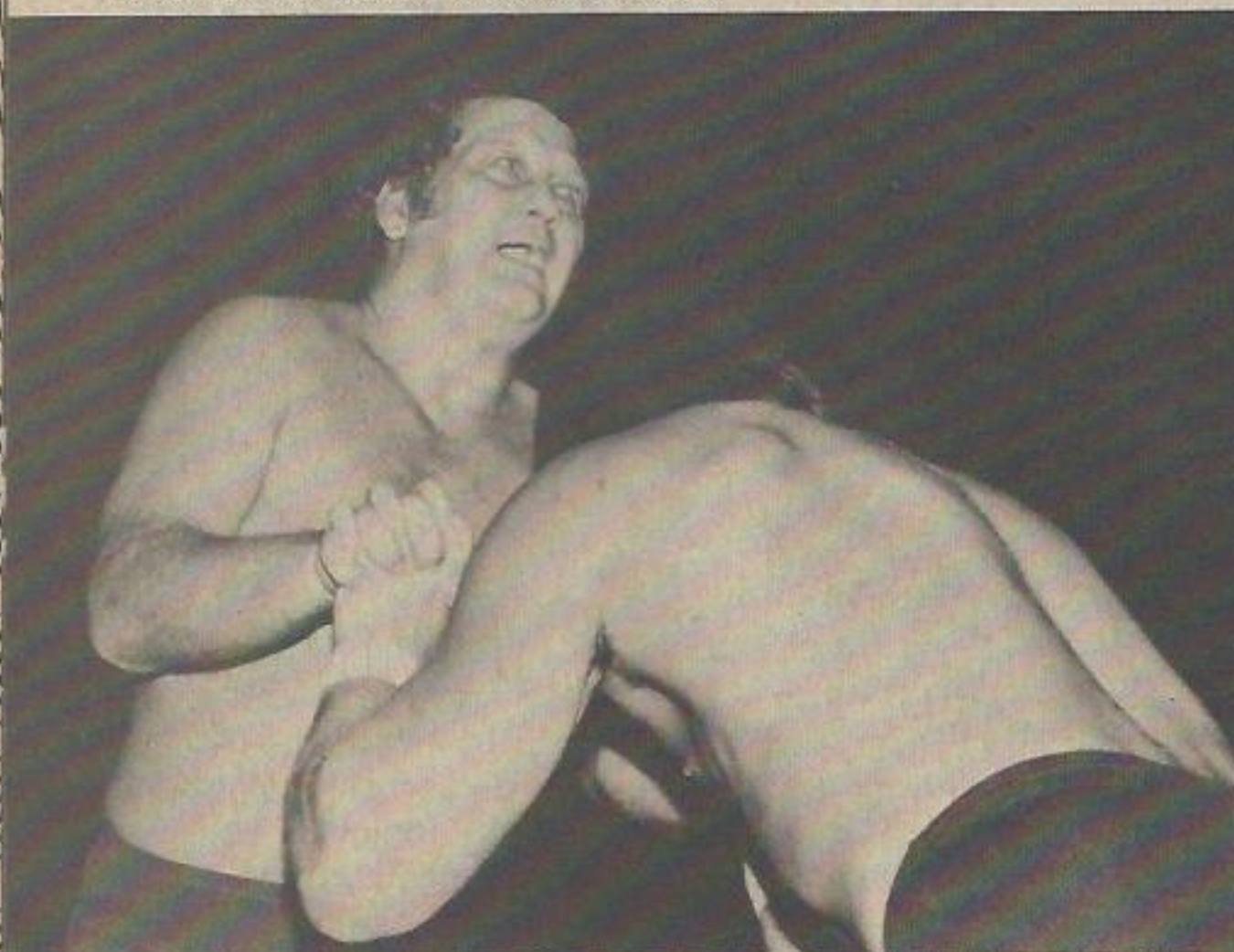
"I was completely exhausted after that match with the Andersons," he explained. "I mean, to wrestle twice in one day like that, with such a commute between cities . . . listen, I don't think anyone could handle a schedule like that.

"On the other hand, I just couldn't resist coming back to Atlanta once again, especially when my good friend Steve O calls me up and says, 'Come on back, let's wrestle against the Andersons.' Like in the movies, it was an offer I just couldn't refuse.

"But I'll tell you," DiBiase concluded, "I don't think I would ever try to do something like that again. It taught me a valuable lesson about wrestling and physical exertion in general: don't overextend yourself. Test yourself, stretch your abilities to the limit, and then some, but go too far, and you'll have to suffer the consequences." □



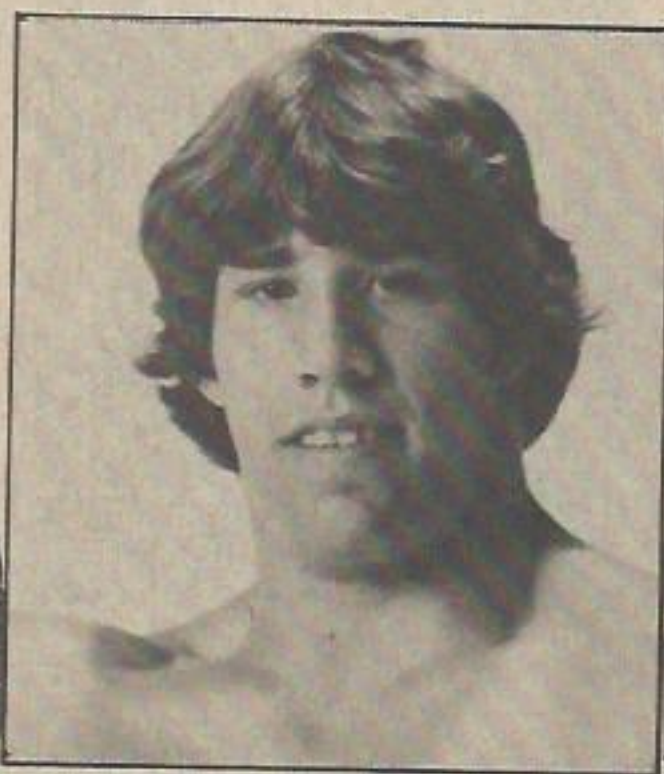
The Andersons apparently were aware of the fact that DiBiase had wrestled in Louisiana that same day. Gene stomps away at Ted's leg (above) and takes the advantage in a battle of fingerlocks (below).



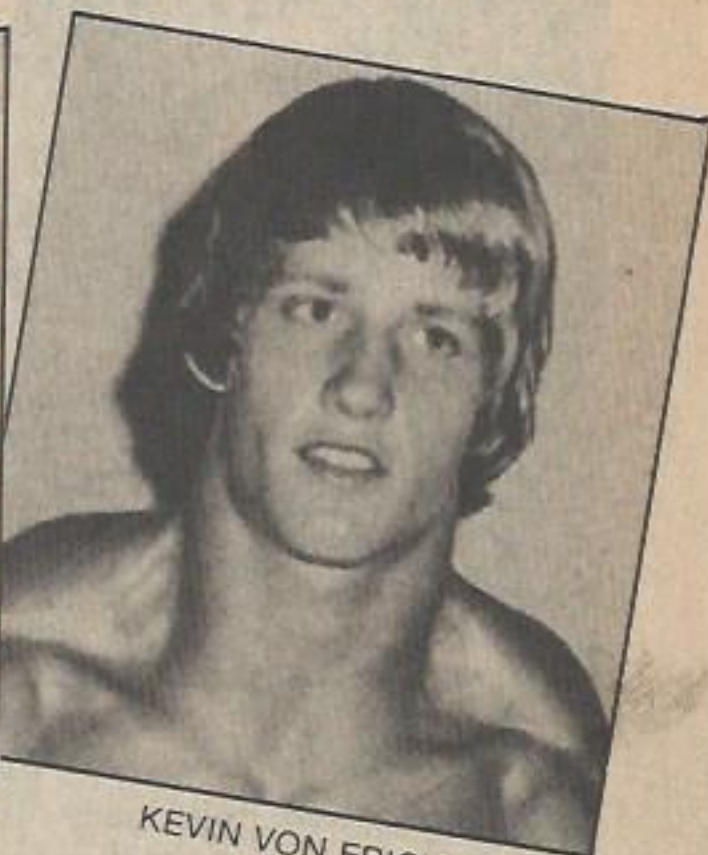
Kerry, David, & Kevin Von Erich: BROTHERS ON A



DAVID VON ERICH



KERRY VON ERICH



KEVIN VON ERICH

COLLISION COURSE

DAVID VON ERICH: Tall, slim, lithe as a panther in the ring. Quite often his style is compared to that of his famous father Fritz Von Erich. Sometimes impulsive, David believes in fighting fire with fire; break a rule while you're in the ring with him, and you will no doubt pay the consequences.

Kevin Von Erich: Aerial artist supreme. Eldest of the Von Erich brothers, he sports a powerful dropkick that has sent

many an opponent crashing to the canvas.

Kerry Von Erich: A devastating combination of the talents of his two brothers. An extremely versatile athlete, an expert in both track and football has only added to his aura of invulnerability in the ring.

In various tag team combinations, these three brothers of the ring have waged battle against such unmerciful tag teams as Baron Von

Raschke and Dick Murdoch, Kabuki and Chan Chung, and Siegfried Stanke and Jerry Brown.

Individually, their opponents have ranked among the top champions in all of wrestling. Gino Hernandez, Harley Race, and Dick Murdoch have all faced the wrath of the Von Erichs.

Now it appears as if the three Von Erich brothers may be relentlessly headed on a deadly

No one knows when, but the day may come sooner than any of the three Von Erich brothers think. As Kerry, David, and Kevin make their moves for the NWA title, it becomes inevitable that they would have to face each other in the ring. When brother rises against brother, literally anything can happen



Above left: David lifts Harley Race off the top turnbuckle and flings him across the ring. Above right: David effortlessly backdrops David Price. Below: Kerry sends Tim Hubbard in flight.

collision course destined to destroy one, two, or perhaps all three brothers some time in the not too distant future.

It appears now as if all three brothers want to go after the NWA title. What they may not have realized is that to do so, they would likely have to wrestle each other.

What would be the outcome if David Von Erich had to wrestle his older brother Kevin? Or what if Kerry and David met each other in the ring? And consider the possible result of a Kerry-Kevin match!

"Who cares?" asks manager/wrestler Gary Hart. "I mean really, who could really care less? I sure couldn't. As far as I'm concerned, those three baboons, those three stooges could kill each other off in the ring. If you ask me, everyone would be the better for it if it *did* happen. Sort of a mercy killing, you know?"

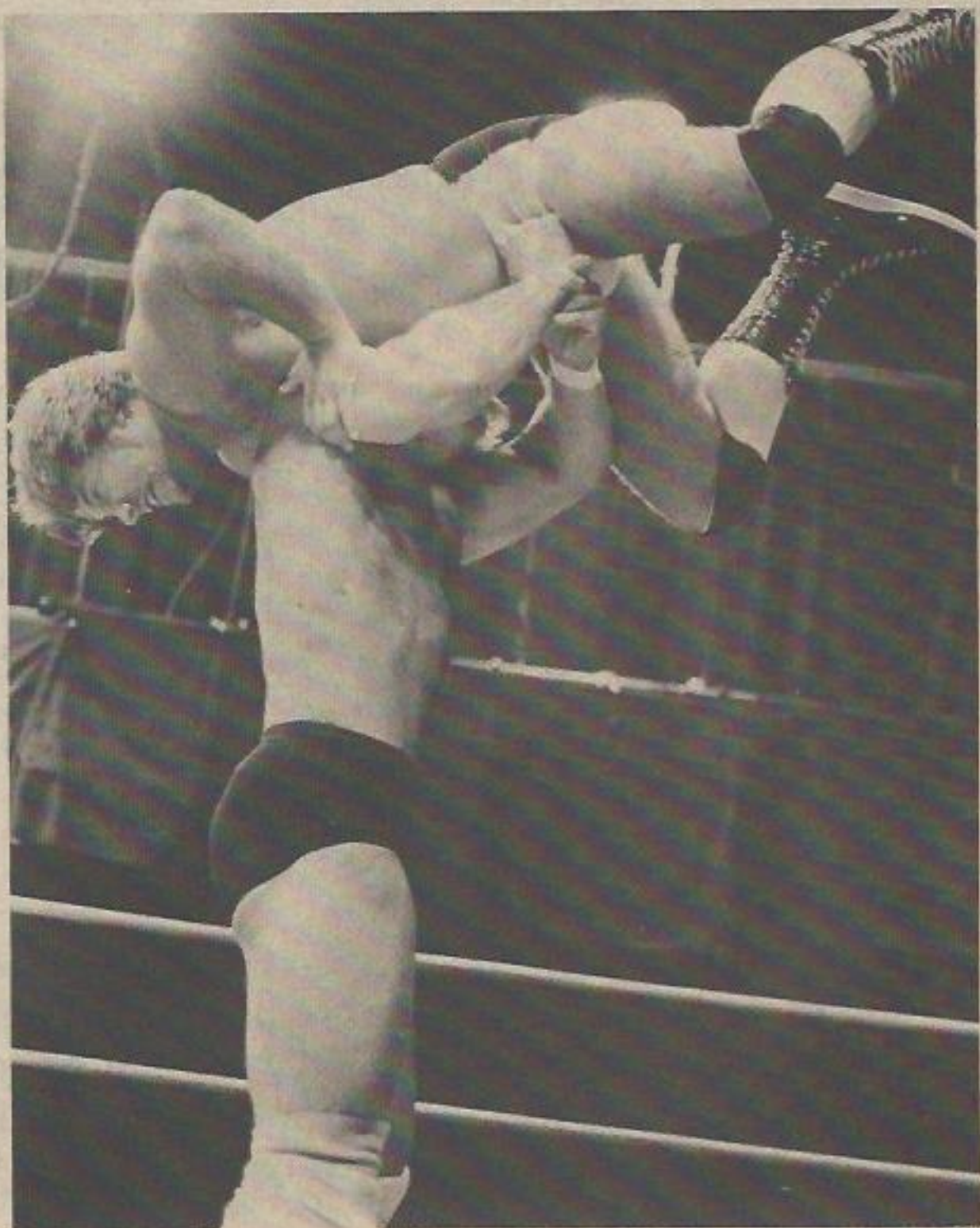
"Actually, come to think of it, a three-way match up would be interesting," said Hart. "After all, where else could you have three possible matches where

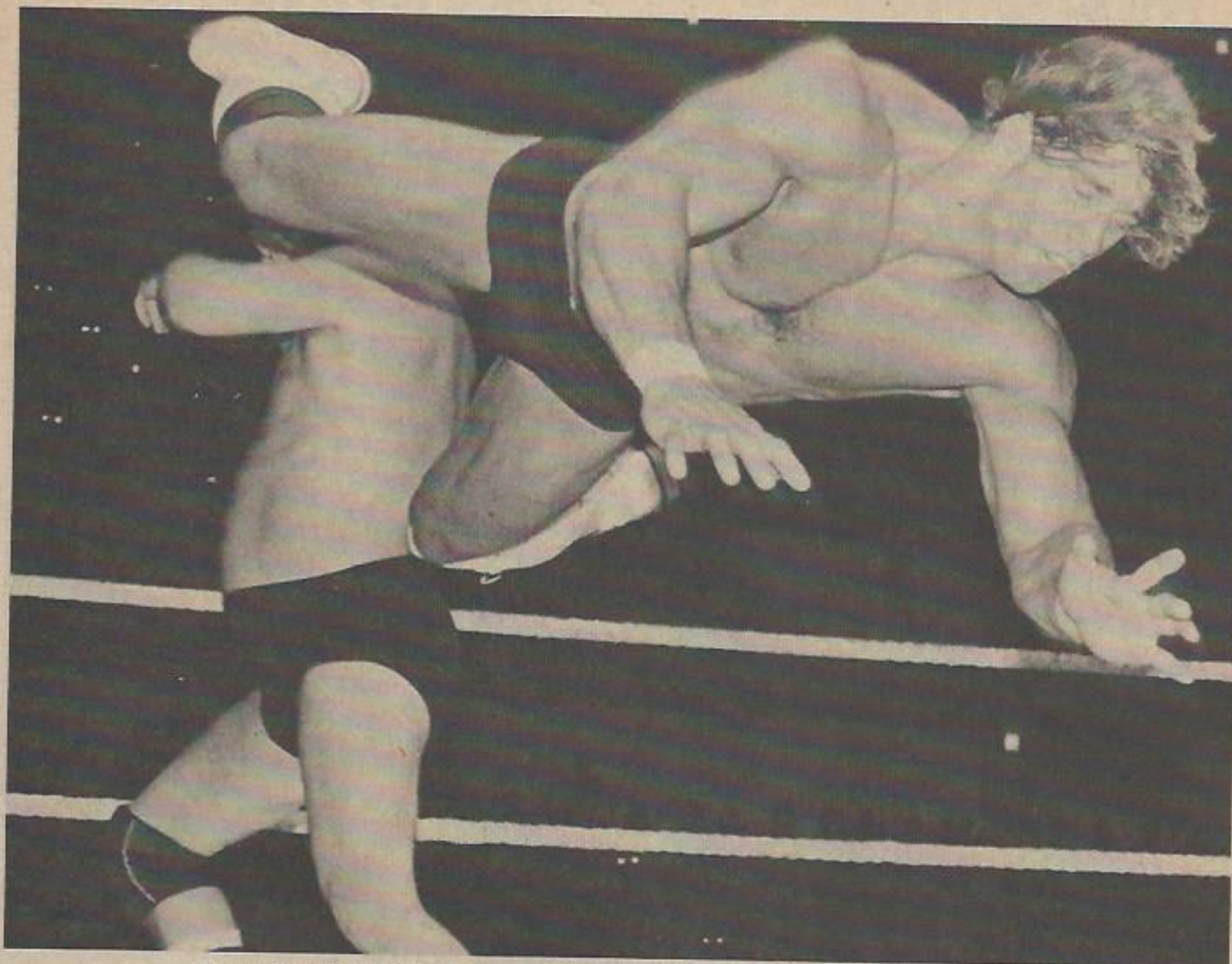
both wrestlers are guaranteed to lose?! Kerry vs. David, or Kevin vs. Kerry . . . what's the difference? In any case, both men would lose! It would be one of the funniest matches ever!"

Gary Hart's snide sarcasm aside, there are those who are genuinely concerned about the ramifications of a possible Von Erich sibling rivalry.

"I hope it never happens," said Ivan Putski. "These three men are fine wrestlers. More than that, they are brothers, and more than brothers. They are closer than any other set of brothers that I know. They should not lose that relationship because of their chosen profession."

"I can't dictate to my sons what they can or can not do," said





Above: Kerry Von Erich sports one of the finest flying dropkicks in wrestling as his opponent finds out. Below: With deadly accuracy, Kevin is about to use his famous father's clawhold on the hated Ken Patera in a St. Louis ring.



famous father Fritz Von Erich. "Naturally, I would like to see one of them claim the NWA title. But then again, I don't know what would happen to their relationship as brothers if they had to face off against each other professionally. I can't say for sure one way or the other, but I have a nagging suspicion that it wouldn't be very good for any of them."

Of course, no one could really say for sure what might happen with the three Von Erich brothers until it actually happened. Then again, the question of whether they will have to face off against each other in the ring is purely speculative as well.

Remember, though: all three

are hungry for the title. All three are aiming for the top spot in the NWA. Should they each devote their complete time and effort to gaining the title, that would make an intrafamily clash inevitable.

That eventuality raises the most important question of all: how far will brother go against brother for the sake of a title? Would Kerry Von Erich break his brother David's leg if he had to? Would David break rules to win a match against Kevin? What kinds of painful maneuvers would Kevin be willing to use in the ring against Kerry?

We can only wait until it happens. That time may come sooner than anybody thinks. □

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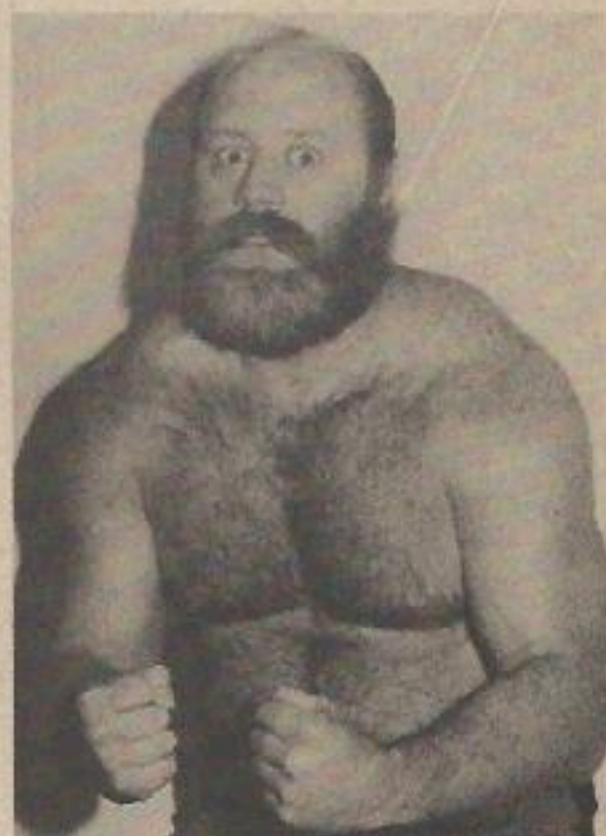
WHAT'S HAPPENING

(Continued from Page 8)

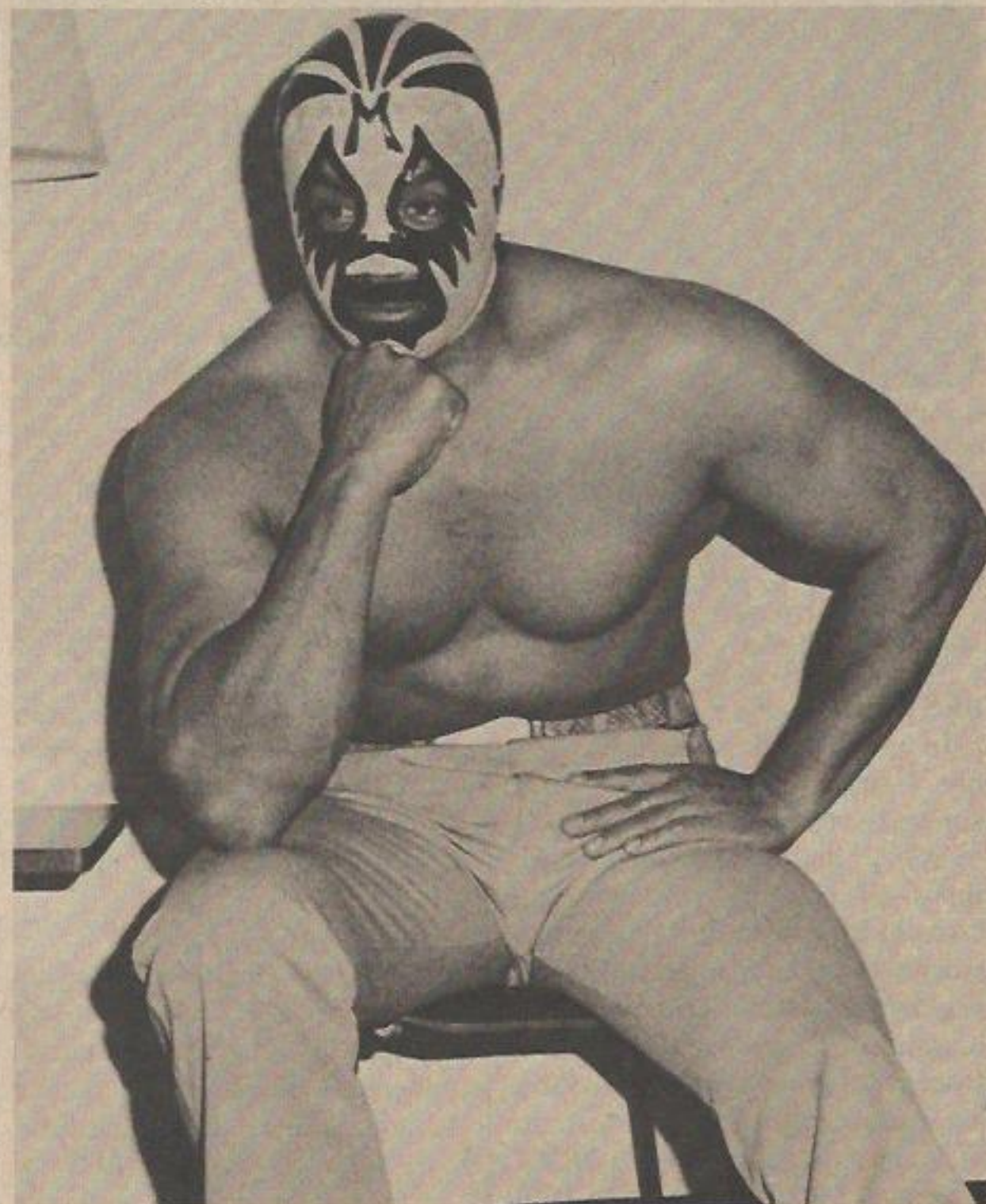
with his fantastic aerial style and feats of strength.

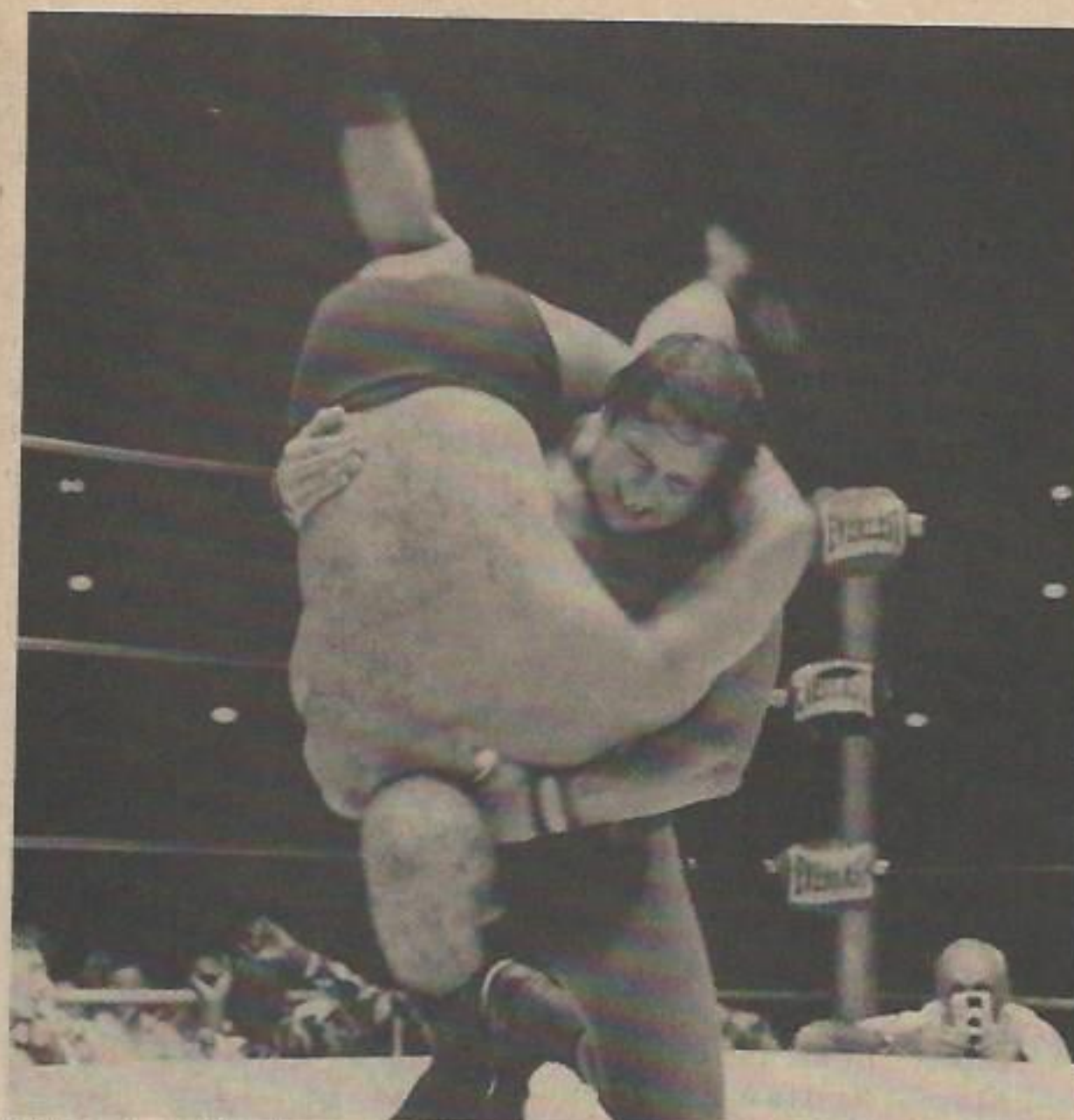
Bugsy McGraw is teaming with The Dream Machine in Tennessee. Bugsy, once a fan favorite, is now despised again... The Moondogs are off on a tour of South Africa... Mil Mascaras has re-negotiated his contract with WWF promoters and plans to stay in the area longer than originally expected.

It looks like it will never end. Tommy Gilbert and Jim Kent have engaged in some weird battles—bounty matches, cage matches, chain matches, etc. And the feud still has not been settled. Kent recently put a bounty on Tommy's



Above: It's a vicious Bugsy McGraw who fans are booing in Tennessee. Bugsy is now managed by Jimmy Hart. Below: Mil Mascaras ponders his career in the WWF. He has just renegotiated his contract in that area.





Bob Roop's neckbreaker takes its toll on another hapless victim. Roop is now the Louisiana state champion and he vows to cripple men like Junkyard Dog. "I'll own Louisiana wrestling in no time," he vows.

head, but now seems determined to do the job himself.

Pat Patterson made a trip to the AWA to wrestle Nick Bockwinkel. After a very violent confrontation, Bockwinkel was disqualified when manager Bobby Heenan interfered on his behalf . . . The Kiwis have invaded Florida . . . Mr. Wrestling II does not believe that Freebird Michael Hayes should be trusted. "I've seen too many guys turn good just to spy on their enemies," II said. "I'm sure he'll turn on one of us once he gets all the information he needs."

Tommy Rich disagreed.

"II is out of his mind," he said. "I don't know what's gotten into him. Mike has proven his worth and I think he should be trusted."

In one of the most classic battles in WWF history, Magnificent Muraco grappled to an exhausting one-hour draw with WWF champion Bob Backlund in

Madison Square Garden . . . Terry Taylor is locked in a bitter feud with Kevin Sullivan . . . Fred Blassie was a guest star on a Dick Clark TV special . . . El Gran Apollo's mentor, Carlos Colon, has joined him for some tag team matches in Florida.

NWA champion Dusty Rhodes is very confused as to why Harley Race has not requested a rematch as of yet. "I don't understand," Dusty told us. "He is wrestling regularly but staying far away from me. I don't know what he's up to."

Ernie Ladd is managing The Samoans in Louisiana. "This way they'll be even greater," Ladd vows. "I'm lookin' after them real good now" . . . Bob Roop has taken the Louisiana heavyweight title belt . . . Blackjack Mulligan Jr. has recaptured the Mid-Southern title he lost to John Studd.

And that's what's happening. See you at the matches. ☐

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(Continued from Page 12)

for a longer period of time."—
Renita DeLaney, Jersey
Shore, PA

- A: Tommy Rich replies: "I'll tell you, Renita, I've been in special training for some time as part of my road back to the NWA championship. When the time is right, you can be sure that I will make my move and wrestle for the championship again. When I do, I guarantee that I will win the title, and that my title reign will be a long and healthy one."

- Q: "Now that Kevin Sullivan has emerged as the premier wrestler with that fantastic body of his, what response does he expect from the fans?"—
Mary Brittan, Lehigh Valley, PA

- A: "That's a pretty stupid question, Mary," replied Kevin. "I don't expect any reaction, because the fans are doing what comes naturally: they all love, worship, and adore me, and that's the way it should be. Besides, if you had read *The Wrestler* just two months ago, you would have seen an entire section devoted to me and the record



Kevin Sullivan proudly displays his new physique.

breaking amount of fan mail I've been receiving."

- Q: "I would like to ask my idol Bobby Heenan what his opinion of WWF champion Bob Backlund is."—LeRoy Tilson, Sanford, FL

- A: When asked this question, a puzzled look came across Bobby Heenan's face. "Who? Bob Backlund is a champion? Of what? As far as I'm con-




Bobby Heenan does not even regard Bob Backlund as a champion.

cerned, the only champion I know is Nick Bockwinkel, champion of the AWA. I never even think about Bob Backlund, so how could I have an opinion on him?"

- Q: "I would like to ask Ric Flair how he keeps in such excellent shape for his wrestling matches."—Liz Barnett, Murphy NC

- A: "Exercise, and lots of it," says Flair. "Of course, I also follow a strict dietary program, but mainly I exercise, jog, and pump iron. As far as the results, well, you can see for yourself. I must be doing something right!" □

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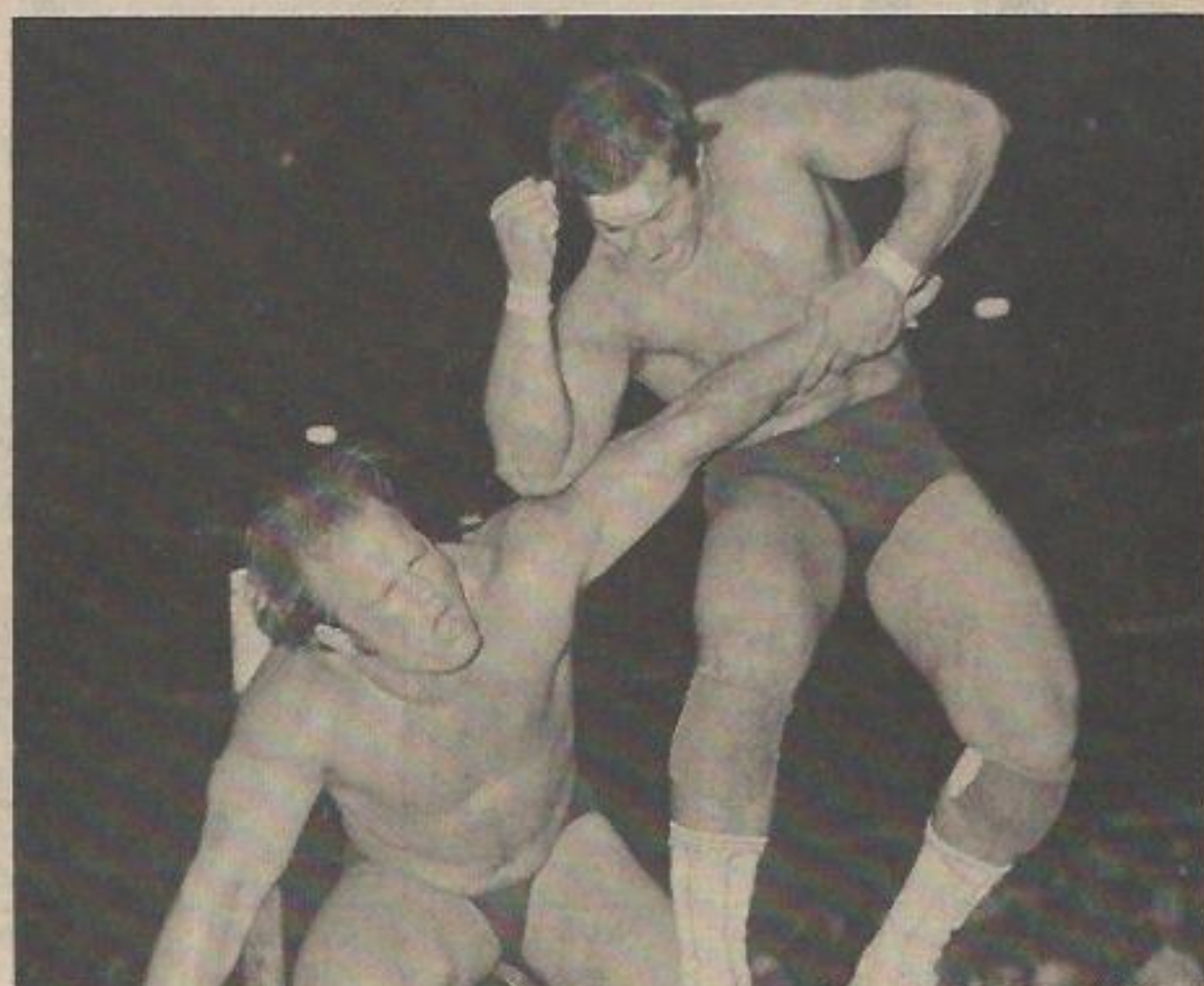
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EL GRAN APOLLO

(Continued from Page 25)



A well-placed elbow to the rotator cuff brings a cry of pain from Sawyer (above). A vicious-looking Apollo launches an attack from the top turnbuckle during a "Street Brawl" with Bobby Jagers (below). Apollo prefers a more scientific approach to his trade.



getting pinned . . . unless of course he cheats in some way."

Apollo's feud with Sawyer is his current vendetta, but he has also tangled with other wrestlers recently. A few months ago saw the development of two brutal rivalries.

"Bobby Jagers and R.T. Tyler," said Apollo. "Both of these men are despicable

individuals. In fact, I even hesitate to bring their names up, because they do not deserve to have their names printed in any magazine, but I feel I must anyway to make the wrestling fans aware of their appalling tendencies in the ring. Everything they do is a shameful bruise to the honorable sport of wrestling."

Are there any other wrestlers that Apollo would like to set straight?

"Tully Blanchard," he replied, "another piece of trash infesting the wrestling world. This sport would be much better off if all these men, Blanchard, Jagers, Tyler, Sawyer, were eradicated."

Somewhere behind steely eyes lurks a determination to cleanse the sport of these men. El Gran Apollo is on the job, and any wrestler who thinks of crossing his path would do well to think twice before doing so. □

CORRESPONDENT REPORTS

(Continued from Page 10)

Tony Garea stopped Captain Lou Albano and Rex the Moondog... S.D. Jones over Larry Sharpe... Baron Scicluna trampled Jack Carson.

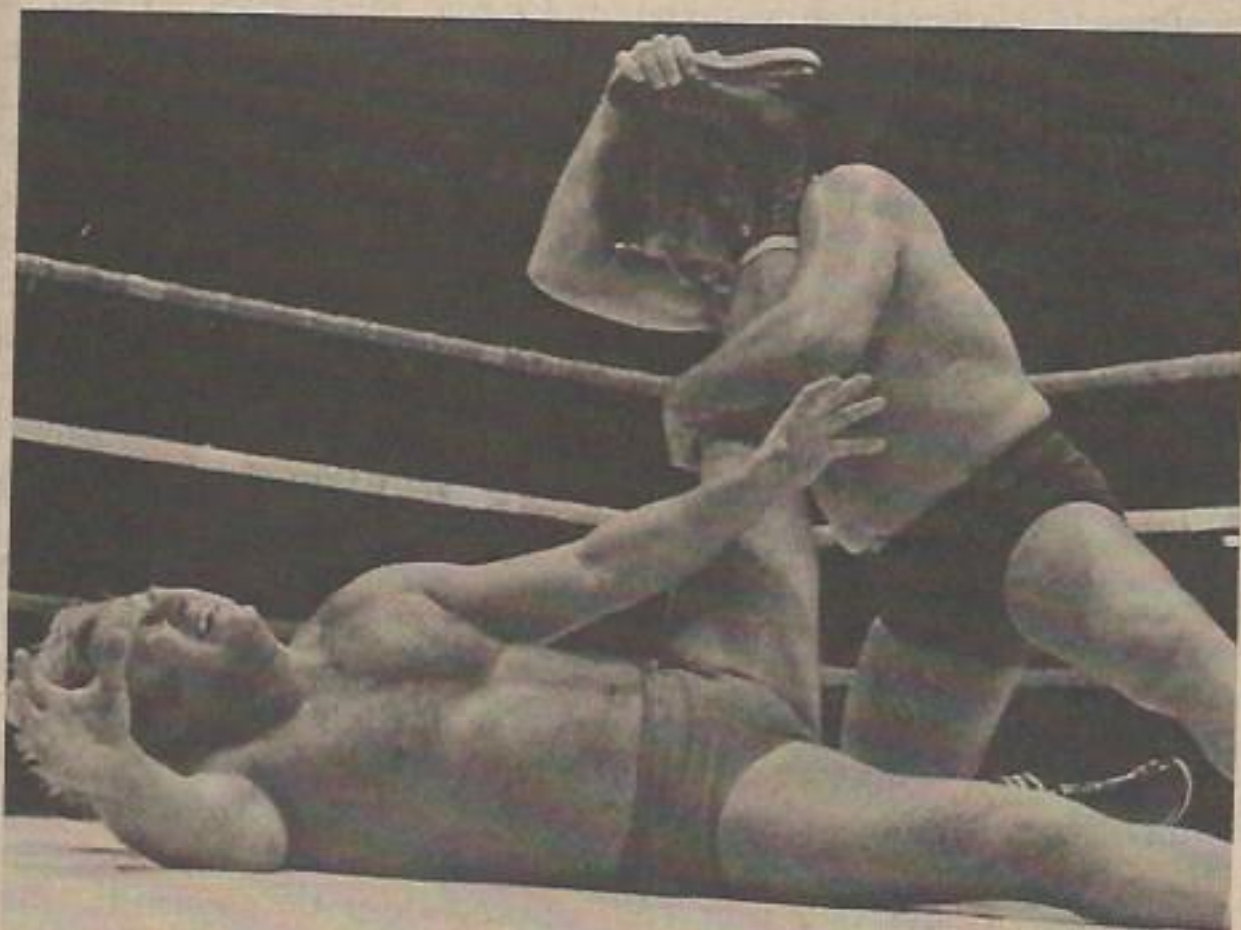
LEXINGTON, KY—Correspondent: Mike Bottoms—The main event featured the team of Buggy McGraw and the Dream Machine against Jerry "The King" Lawler and special partner Handsome Jimmy Valiant. Lawler and Valiant took an early advantage. Midway through, McGraw and the Dream gained the upperhand by using dirty tactics and double-teaming. Lawler and Valiant came back and began to overwhelm their opponents with solid teamwork. Manager Jimmy Hart, seeing his team losing, entered the ring and attacked Lawler. A brawl ensued involving Lawler and Valiant, as well as Bill Dundee, Dutch Mantell, and Steve Keirn against McGraw, the Dream, Hart, and the Nightmares. Lawler and friends soon sent Hart and his

stable running for the dressing room.

In other bouts, Tommy Rich and Bill Dundee stopped The Assassins... Roy Rogers whipped Buddy Wayne... Ricky and Robert Gibson crushed The Nightmares.

GREEN BAY, WI—Correspondent: Jeff Sharkey—Returning this night to the AWA were British Empire champion Billy Robinson to tangle with AWA kingpin Nick Bockwinkel. Billy controlled most of the bout, particularly when he lost his temper and began to run wild in the ring. Bockwinkel charged at Robinson, but Billy ducked out of the way, and Nick found himself deposited over the ropes and out of the ring. Thus Bockwinkel retained his belt by disqualification.

In other bouts, Tito Santana over Sheik Adnan El-Kaissie... Greg Gagne and Jim Brunzell ousted Jesse Ventura and Adrian Adonis... Brad Rheingans whipped Bad Boy Barker. □



Nick Bockwinkel, despite taking a tremendous beating, retained his AWA title when Billy Robinson was disqualified for accidentally flipping the champion over the top rope.

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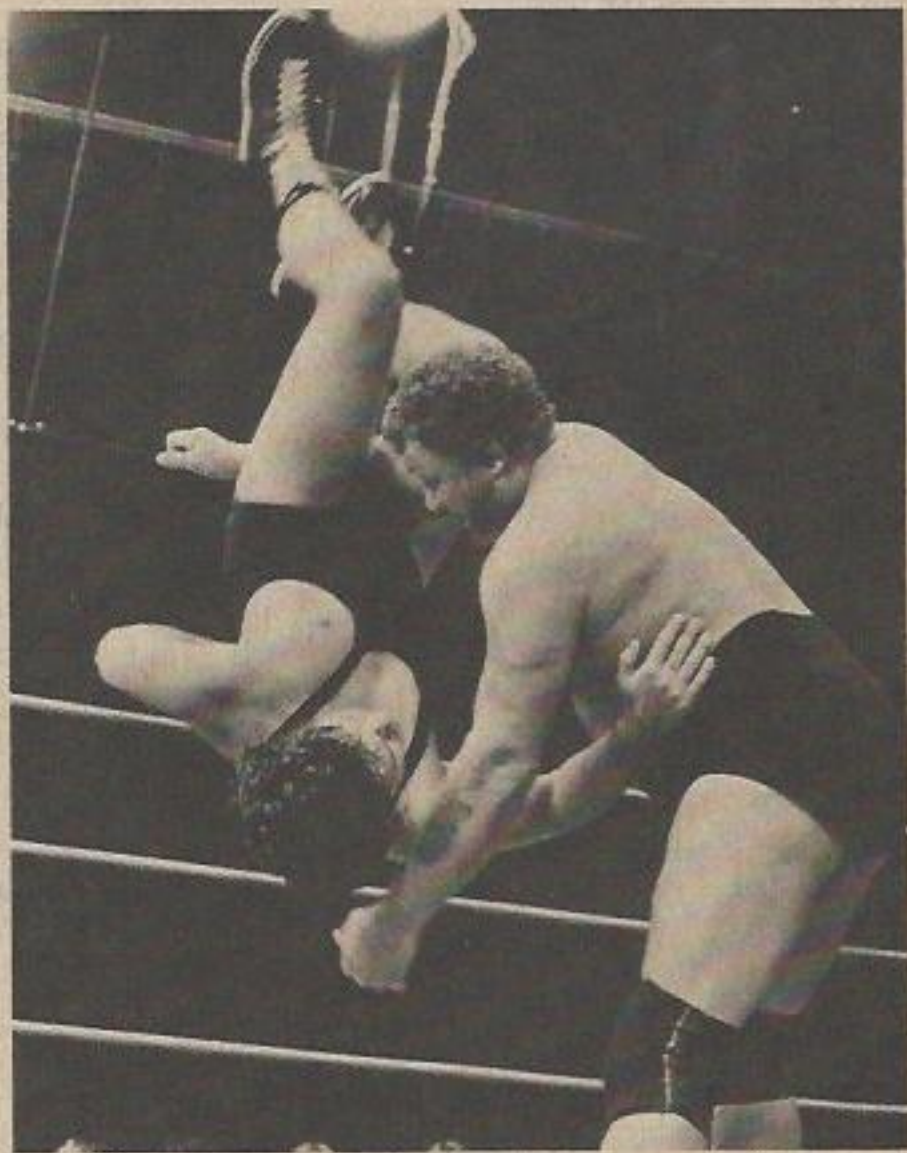
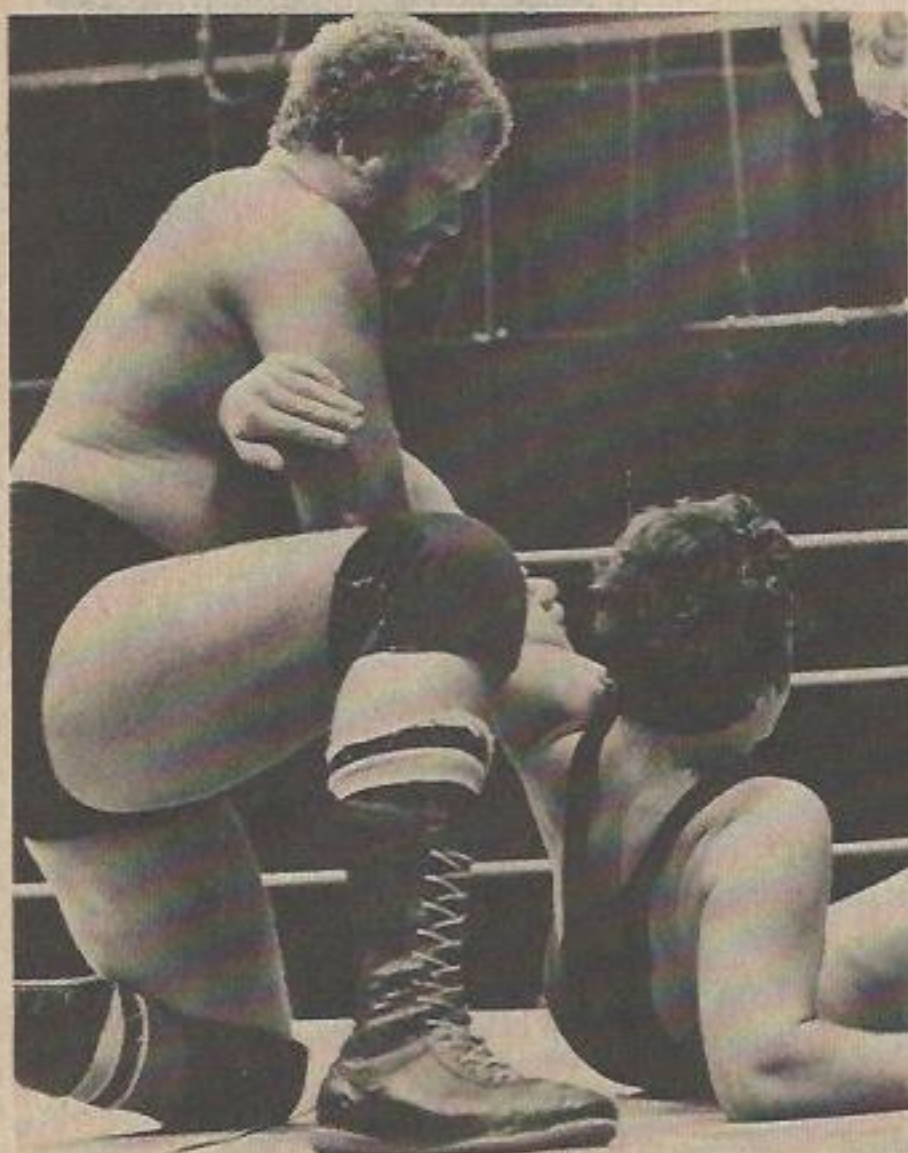
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HARLEY RACE

(Continued from Page 33)



Though his strategy of wrestling preliminary wrestlers as training for an NWA title match has come under heavy criticism, how can anyone question a man who has won the title six different times?

against a minor league opponent, I'm able to practice maneuvers and refine particular ring techniques that I otherwise wouldn't be able to against someone who might be a top contender for the title," Race said.

"This kind of an advantage," continued Race, "coupled with my already formidable skills and experiences in wrestling will assure the fact that, once I finally make it up through the ranks again and have my new style completely refined and focused, I will regain my championship belt, and I will dethrone that idiot Rhodes."

Yet while the long and arduous process of refinement and reconstruction may ultimately be of immeasurable benefit to Race's wrestling style, it can hardly be a positive force upon his own personality. *The*

Wrestler asked Race whether or not he found it degrading to find himself wrestling virtual non-entities in the wrestling world so soon after having been NWA champion.

"No, not at all," explained Race. "On the other hand, it is very uplifting to me to be able to rip through these puny amateurs. Well, they're not really amateurs, but they might as well be."

"I know that what I'm doing is right for me," continued Race, "and that when I finally reach the end of the road here, it's going to be the championship belt that I find around my waist. Okay, so maybe there isn't any immediate challenge for me here, but there is a greater challenge in the fact that I'm devoting my energies and time to a long-term project the culmination of which I am

positive will be the dethronement of champion whale of all time, Dusty Rhodes."

Harley Race has chosen a most difficult path to the championship. His will and determination is reflected every day in the fact that he has decided to restructure his entire wrestling style and demeanor.

Most important of all, Race is comfortable with the road he has chosen. Though it will take a good deal of time and work, he knows that it will be successful in the end, and for this reason alone he continues to reassure himself that he has chosen the proper path to the top again.

Should he manage to again become the top contender, Race will be shooting for an unprecedented seventh title. This would place him alone, without peer in the record books. □

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DUSTY RHODES

(Continued from Page 35)

before his eyes he sees not only the Funk brothers, but the images of Gotch, Lewis, and Hackenschmidt as well! They form a circle around Dusty, who is unable to move or even to close his eyes! Once having formed their circle, they begin to close in on Dusty, and the chant begins.

"Dus-ty . . . Dus-ty . . . Dus-ty . . ." over and over again, becoming louder with each repetition. And, with each repetition, the circle becomes smaller, the voices louder, the circle smaller, the tension greater, the circle smaller, the fear greater, the circle . . .

ARRGH!

Dusty awakens from his tortured sleep in a cold sweat. He knows the meaning of the nightmare all too well. It is horribly similar to the nightmares he has been having each night for some time, now. In each, it is the

spectre of the Funks that haunts Rhodes the most.

"It's a horrible thing," said Dusty, "to be haunted by this dream night after night. Look, it's bad enough to have to see the Funk's ugly mugs in the ring, but to have to see them every night in my dreams is intolerable.

"Anyway, I'm convinced that the Funks will not rest until they bury me!" continued Rhodes. "Look, it's so obvious as far as symbolism in the dream. I've talked with many people about this, and it all seems to fit together.

"First of all," explained Dusty, "there is the image of the graveyard. Any fool can realize that the graveyard stands for death, for finally putting an end to something that is important . . . like a championship.

"Then there's the circle of wrestlers, past and present. This

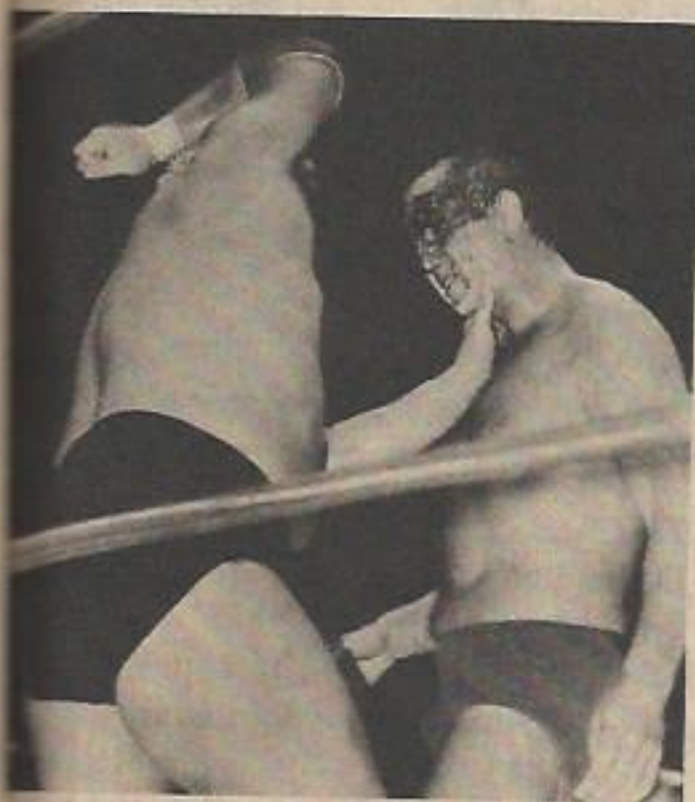
This is no dream: The Funks' hatred for Rhodes is a harsh reality. Terry mounts an illegal assault upon the champion outside the ring (below). Dusty opens a cut over Dory's eye with a series of elbowsmashes (opposite right).



represents not only the history of wrestling, but the way wrestling is now, and my main enemies: the Funks. The way they continually close in on me in a circle shows the fact that they will never rest until I am placed in the graveyard and become part of wrestling's past, something that the Funks would no doubt dearly love to see happen to me."

Dusty's face calmed down a bit as he related the rest of his thoughts.

"Now don't get me wrong," said Rhodes, "I'm not afraid of anyone in the ring, least of all the Funks. But my unconscious mind is trying to tell me something that maybe I don't know. Would the Funks stoop so low as to try and ambush



me out of the ring? Would they attempt to finish me off in some other horrible way . . . perhaps even while I sleep? I doubt it, but the unconscious mind is not something to be taken lightly.

"I'm not quite sure what everything in this dream means, but I know it has to do directly with the Funks. As long as they confine their obscenities against wrestlers and wrestling to that area within the four cornerposts, I don't have anything to worry about."

Nothing to worry about, true, except for the nightmare, that damned recurring nightmare. And no one, least of all Dusty, can say when it will stop. ☐

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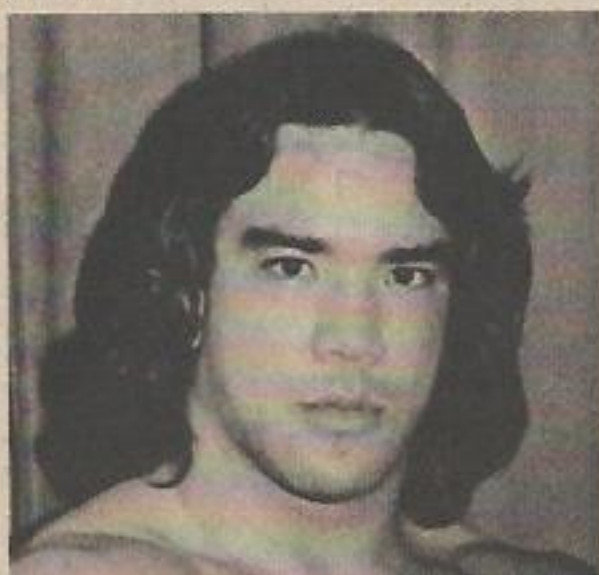
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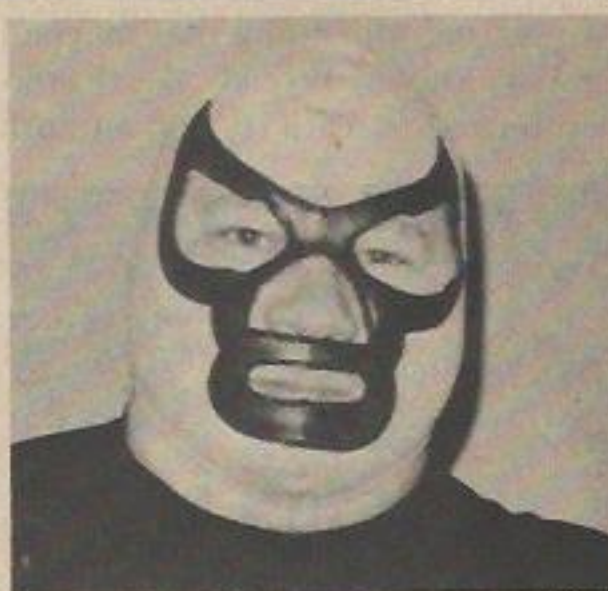
THUMBS UP, THUMBS DOWN

(Continued from Page 18)



THUMBS UP to Rick Steamboat: His current quest for the Mid-Atlantic singles title is a noble one, particularly due to the fact that he is attempting to unseat one of the great Mid-Atlantic villains of all time, Ivan Koloff. We wish all the best to Steamboat, and much luck in his title pursuit.

THUMBS DOWN to Masked Assassin #1: This hated maniac claims he won Dusty Rhodes' NWA title! Assassin #1 seems to believe that he had pinned Rhodes for no less than seven seconds. If there is anyone of significance who actually believes this absurd story, he or she has not yet made their views public.



THUMBS UP to Jerry Lawler: Despite great success in Memphis, Lawler reorganized his busy schedule and traveled to Florida. His help in the campaign against the Funks can only serve to expedite their obliteration in the very near future, a goal for which more wrestlers should be working. Bravo for helping to make Florida safe again.

THUMBS DOWN to Crazy Captain Lou Albano: He abandoned The Moondogs at a time when he should have been steering them closer to a pair of tag team belts. His casual discarding of these two obvious maniacs in favor of Mr. Fuji and Mr. Saito is heartless and irresponsible.



Q&A

(Continued from Page 21)



Life isn't always so pleasant, even for a champion.

Look at guys like Crusher. Come on, man, he's nothing but a fat, over-the-hill brawler. And look at people like Jim Brunzell, or Greg Gagne. Come on, Greg Gagne? He'll never be half the wrestler his old

man was, and half of nothing is still nothing. And tonight, against Tito Santana, man, sometimes I wonder whether I should be a one-man tag team and go up two on one just to get some competition.

Q: How can you call Crusher a fat, over-the-hill brawler when he's rated top contender to your title?

A: Top contender? Yeah, I've seen those ratings, and as far as I'm concerned, the only thing they ever seem to get right is who occupies the top spot in the AWA, namely ME. If Crusher is the to contender, if he's supposed to be the biggest problem I have to worry about as far as keeping this

belt around my waist is concerned, then I can guarantee every one of my fans right here and now that the AWA championship reign of Nick Bockwinkel will be an extremely long and healthy one.

Q: Any parting words?

A: Only that any man who steps into the ring with me had better expect to run out of the ring in fear or to be carried out of the ring in agony, and any fan who comes to my matches can expect to see the single best wrestler in the world today, and that's me, the champion.

Q: Nick, thanks for being with us on Q&A.

A: My pleasure. □

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